

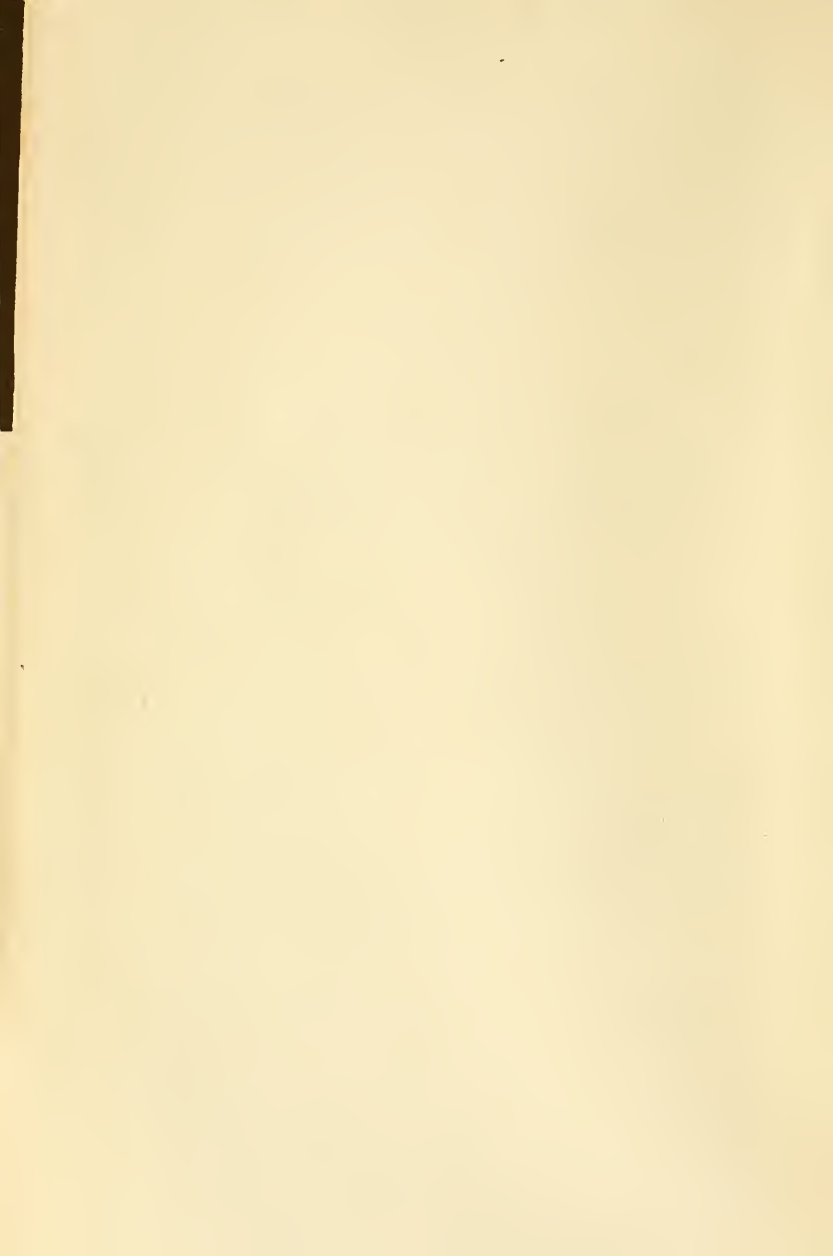
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Religion





RELIGION:

A REVELATION AND A RULE
OF LIFE.

BY

REV. WILLIAM KIRKUS, M. A., LL. B.,

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON:

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TO
THE RIGHT REVEREND H. C. POTTER, D. D., LL. D.,
ASSISTANT BISHOP OF NEW YORK.

RIGHT REVEREND AND DEAR SIR:

I am sure that nobody can imagine that, in these few dedicatory lines, I presume or desire to represent you as in the least degree responsible for any part of the contents of this little volume—not one sentence of which has been in any way submitted to you. But in venturing to offer to the public the first book that, in the United States, I have published, I am glad to avail myself of the opportunity of expressing not only my profound reverence for your high office, and my ever increasing admiration of your personal administration of it, but also my very grateful sense of a long series of kindnesses to myself. For, during more than twelve years, I have received from you the most valuable assistance, in all sorts of ways. When I was slowly feeling my way to an understanding of the religious life and ecclesiastical law and usages of my adopted country, I could have had no greater advantage than the example and precept of one so perfectly well informed as yourself, and occupying so honourable a position as that which

you then so honourably filled. No education could have been better for me than that which I received when I had the honour to be associated with you, as one of your assistant ministers, in Grace Church, New York. With the sincerest gratitude, and the most earnest hope and prayer that your life and energy may long be spared for the incalculably important work to which you have been called by Almighty God, I remain,

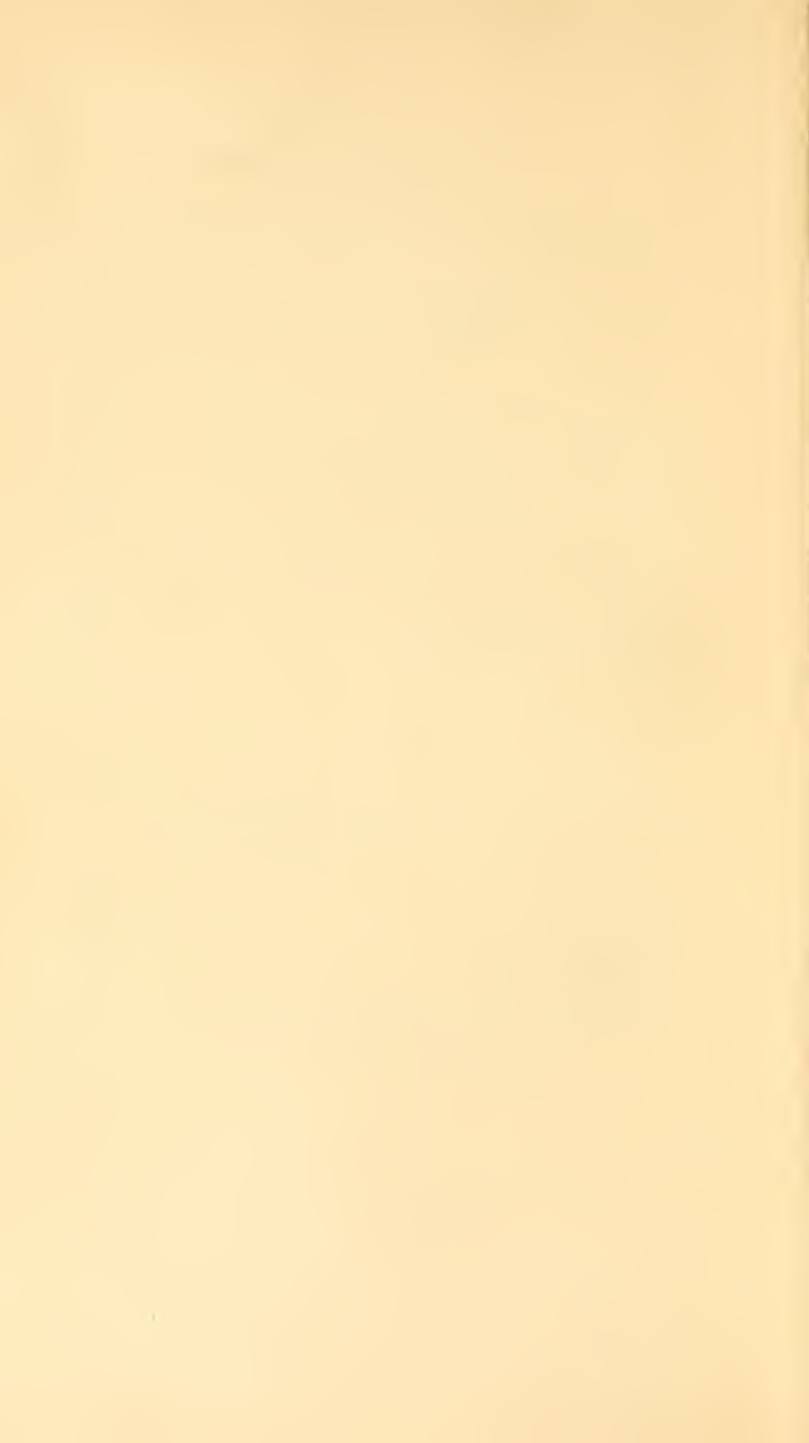
Right Reverend and dear Sir,

Yours most faithfully and affectionately,

WILLIAM KIRKUS.

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PREFACE.

I offer these Sermons to the public with the most unfeigned diffidence. Two of them have been published separately before; the rest, with the *Supplementary Notes*, appear now for the first time. I feel especially afraid that in the Sermon on *The Effect of an Exclusive or Disproportionate Study of the Physical Sciences*, and in its *Supplementary Note*, I may be supposed to have gone much beyond my depth. But I think it will be observed, by any candid reader, that I have not presumed to deal with any scientific subject *as* scientific. At the same time we are continually meeting, in the current literature and conversation of the day, with all sorts of speculations, hypotheses, positive assertions, and even contemptuous "sneers," which, occurring in books written by "scientists," and expressed in quasi-scientific language, are supposed to possess the authority which rightly belongs to their authors as students and teachers of *physical* science; though the speculations I refer to really belong to an altogether different region of thought and inquiry. Especially is this true of modern speculation as to the

relation of *the mind* to the *physical structures* with which its operations seem to be most closely connected.

The range of possible knowledge is so enormous that it is necessary to divide it into separate portions, and to investigate them separately. Thus we may study separately *the phenomena of mind* ; or separately *the phenomena of the nervous system* ; or *the relations* between the facts *ascertained* by the first set of studies and the facts *ascertained* by the second set of studies.

The phenomena of "mind" consist of sensations, thoughts, processes of reasoning, emotions, will, the perception of the difference between right and wrong, the imperative of conscience. These can manifestly be investigated only by consciousness ; by the inspection of what we really do or feel when we *see*, or *hear*, or *admire a poem*, or *decide on a course of conduct*, or *reproach ourselves for a crime*. All these phenomena are manifestly outside the sphere of physical science. Again, we may investigate the phenomena of the nervous system by means of anatomy and physiology. We discover the extreme complexity of the brain, the spinal cord, the sensory and motor nerves, and the like. We observe, for instance, that the eye is a structure consisting of certain lenses, muscles, nerves, so and so distributed. But these investigations and discoveries, separately and independently, would give us no notion whatever of the purposes the several structures were adapted to serve in relation to mind.

We could not possibly know, by mere physical research alone, that the nerves of the eye had any more to do with vision than the nerves of the foot. But, again, being ourselves spiritual beings, we carry with us into all departments of investigation spiritual ideals, and we try to find out whether there is any *ascertainable and persistent relation* between mental and material phenomena. We ascertain, to a very limited extent, that there is reason to believe that there is such a relation. For instance, we observe that vision, the sense of sight (which is a purely mental experience), is parallel or co-ordinate with a certain stimulation of the nerves of the eye. But even here, where our knowledge seems most complete, it is traversed by the fact that we *see* in our *sleep*, in dreams, quite as vividly as when we are awake; and insane persons *see* what really does not exist, and also *hear* what is really not audible; so that, in all these cases, the parallelism between mental acts and physical stimulation is altogether destroyed. And, apart from these facts—dreams, hallucinations, illusions, delusions—nobody has ever yet discovered any part of the nervous system which bears the same relation to love, or to logical faculty, or to resentment, or to positiveness and self-assertion, or to memory, which the eye bears to vision or the nerves of the ear to hearing. The utmost, then, that we have positively and certainly ascertained as to the relation of mental operations and certain parts of the nervous system, is

a general parallelism, very often, however, deflected, stopped, traversed—and in no case whatever capable of being *explained*. So far as we know it at all, we know it *as a mere fact*. We cannot find out *how* one set of nerves is parallel (so to speak) to vision, and another to hearing, and another to tasting.

Hence, while the study of the material structure of our bodies yields abundant results, which can be methodically arranged, and which form the object-matter of anatomy and physiology; and while the study of the operations of the mind is equally fruitful, furnishing the object-matter of psychology, and metaphysics, and ethics; the study of the positive relations between these two sets of phenomena is so comparatively barren that it leads to no definite science of any kind. The parallelisms really demonstrated are too few; and especially they are, as I have just said, wholly inexplicable. Neither the physical can be affirmed to be the invariable antecedent of the mental change, nor the mental of the physical. If we can produce pain by irritating a nerve, we can also produce the complicated movements involved in articulate speech by a determination of the will. When two phenomena are reciprocally both cause and effect, their relation must clearly depend upon some *independent* and *higher* cause.

But the inscrutable mystery of the relations between the physical and the mental seems to have an irresistible fascination for some of our scientific leaders. The

drift and purpose of their observations and experiments seem to be actually to annihilate the relation by *identifying* the correlated phenomena, and by resolving all mental phenomena into physical. The effect of this would be—if accomplished—to abolish both ethics and theology; for the remorse of conscience and the belief in God would manifestly be as *inevitable*, both in quantity and quality, as the secretion of bile; and what we now call wickedness or superstition would correspond precisely to some morbid action of the liver or kidneys. It may be very safely affirmed that these assumptions, mischievous as they most unquestionably are, will never permanently displace the irresistible testimony of consciousness. Our *primary* facts are *mental* experiences; and if they are, or could be, invalidated, all knowledge must disappear. But it may fairly be questioned whether the attempt to reduce phenomena so different and mutually exclusive as molecular motion and the emotion of love or the remorse of conscience, is not from the beginning, and quite apart from its consequences, doomed, on purely scientific grounds, to hopeless failure. The following passage from Mr. J. S. Mill's *Logic* (Book III., Chapter 14, §§1-2) is deserving of the most careful study:

Since we are continually discovering that uniformities, not previously known to be other than ultimate, are derivative, and resolvable into more general laws; since (in other words) we are continually discovering the explanation of some sequence which was previously known only as a

fact, it becomes an interesting question whether there are any necessary limits to this philosophical operation, or whether it may proceed until all the uniform sequences in Nature are resolved into some one universal law. For this seems, at first sight, to be the ultimatum towards which the progress of induction, by the deductive method resting on a basis of observation and experiment, is tending. . . .

It is therefore useful to remark that the ultimate laws of Nature cannot possibly be less numerous than the distinguishable sensations or other feelings of our nature—those, I mean, which are distinguishable from one another in quality, and not merely in quantity or degree. For example : since there is a phenomenon, *sui generis*, called colour, which our consciousness testifies to be not a particular degree of some other phenomenon, as heat or odour or motion, but intrinsically unlike all others, it follows that there are ultimate laws of colour ; that, though the facts of colour may admit of explanation, they never can be explained from laws of heat or odour alone, or of motion alone, but that, however far the explanation may be carried, there will always remain in it a law of colour. I do not mean that it might not possibly be shown that some other phenomenon, some chemical or mechanical action, for example, invariably precedes, and is the cause of, every phenomenon of colour. But though this, if proved, would be an important extension of our knowledge of Nature, it would not explain how or why a motion, or a chemical action, can produce a sensation of colour ; and however diligent might be our scrutiny of the phenomena, whatever number of hidden links we might detect in the chain of causation terminating in the colour, the last link would still be a law of colour, not a law of motion, nor of any other phenomenon whatever.

Nobody denies the close general relation, in our present state of existence, between the body and the mind ; nor that some special relations between some

parts of the body and some operations of the mind have been sufficiently proved. But if a far larger number of these special relations should be hereafter discovered, that would not alter the fact that, at the end of ever so long a chain of antecedents, we come at last to mental phenomena which are *sui generis*; and that filial affection, for instance, is intrinsically different from molecular motion, and, though it may be invariably preceded, cannot be explained, by that motion. *Mind* has conducted the practical business of the world from the beginning; a part of its all but infinite products is the whole extant literature of the human race; and we need be under no serious alarm that mankind will cease to reason, and determine, and love, and worship, because anatomists and physiologists have arrived at a completer knowledge of the structure and functions of the brain and nervous system.

But it is in this obscure and comparatively barren region of the study of relations between the physical and the mental, that some of our modern scientists assume a degree of real knowledge enormously out of proportion to their scientific verifications. Thus Dr. Maudsley affirms, in a passage I have quoted elsewhere: "It is not anyhow, as some thoughtlessly conclude, imagination which starts the organic process: it is the organic process which is the condition of [= starts?] imagination." But this assertion can be justified only if Dr. Maudsley can prove that there is a definite

“organic process” invariably related to imagination. But this he cannot prove. On the contrary, self-contradictory though he may be, he describes imagination, in this very passage, as being a sort of living thing, moving along definite tracks, bursting away from them, and forming new tracks by means of “nerve-cells lying around in all states of incomplete development.” The whole passage is as purely anthropomorphic, though by no means as beautiful, as *the Homeric Poems*. If I have misunderstood Dr. Maudsley, I think the reason is that he has departed entirely in his recent book from scientific methods, and has so often contradicted himself that there really is *no* definite meaning in a great part of what he has written.

Since writing *Supplementary Note II.*, at the end of this volume, and the Sermon to which it refers, I have read the notice of Dr. Maudsley’s book in the *Saturday Review*. Whatever may be thought of my own criticism, it will be generally admitted that the writers in the *Saturday Review* have a very well-deserved reputation for intellectual and critical acuteness. The following is an extract from the notice of Dr. Maudsley’s book :

And now to examine the book itself. It would of course be an *ignoratio elenchi* to meet Dr. Maudsley by an *à priori* proof of the existence of God. He avoids, as far as possible, the use of that name and does not want *à priori* proofs ; he distrusts and will have nothing of them. And we shall be first to confess that we cannot give him an *à posteriori*

proof that he would be at all likely to admit. Indeed, the greatest fault that we should find with his book is that he himself has fallen into the great and universal error which may be best put in a syllogism :

Whatsoever is not natural is not true ;
The supernatural is not natural ;
Therefore the supernatural is not true.

Now, as it is the claim, made *totidem literis*, of the supernatural that it is *not* natural, we own that it might be a little surprising to find persons of Dr. Maudsley's intelligence triumphantly reiterating an argument with a major that requires to be proved and a minor which grants the adversary's position. But we are so accustomed to this that we really do not care to affect surprise on this point of the question. They all do it.

The only ground on which both parties can meet in such a matter is clearly an examination of the arguments and method of the disputant for the time being. If Anselm and Descartes have not convinced Dr. Maudsley on the high metaphysical ground, we are not at all likely to do so. We can at least take Dr. Maudsley's own arguments and method to pieces with instruments which Dr. Maudsley himself must necessarily allow. With numerous minor points we have no space to deal. It is indeed strange that any one should produce against omens the argument that "the same event which was an omen of ill luck in one nation was an omen of good luck in another nation," forgetting that on the omen theory there is no reason why this should not be so. It is stranger that at this time of day an *aporia* should be based on the "one" or "two" angels at the Sepulchre. But we shall take wider ground ; and, in the first place, we shall confess our extreme surprise at finding that Dr. Maudsley, who is constantly pitchforking the supernatural out of his doors somehow or other, is perpetually building ladders for her to come back by the window. He condemns with well-justified and conclusive scorn "the explanation of a concrete fact in what is no more than the abstract statement of the same

fact," and certainly there is no more hopeless and persistent fallacy. He is equally scornful of "mere general terms and abstractions," and certainly they are most deceptive. Yet, when we come to Dr. Maudsley's own explanations of phenomena, we are astonished to find that he is always paying himself with terms. The supernatural is to him an abomination, yet his "Nature" is to us one of the most supernatural things that we ever met, and one of the most abstract. He is justly contemptuous of those who "explain the sleep-producing effects of opium by the soporific virtues of that drug." Yet we come across this remarkable sentence in him: "Imagination, which is a prolific faculty or function, always eager and pleased to exercise itself." A prolific faculty or function! always eager and pleased to exercise itself! Surely Imagination is here a general term, an abstraction, and, what is more, a personalized abstraction of the most surprising character. Where this Imagination came from, who made her, what becomes of her, who told him anything about her, Dr. Maudsley can tell us no more than we can tell him about the Archangel Gabriel. Yet he speaks of her exactly as if she were the cat on his hearth. We may not, it seems, believe in the supernatural. But here is an abstract Imagination, which is not yours or mine, but the human race's, and which has the purely personal attributes of prolificness, eagerness, and pleasure. Again: "As long as the *nisus* of evolution lasts in Nature and works through man, we may continue to expect." May we? What, in Heaven's name—or, if that be tabooed, what, in the name of Aristotle—is a *nisus*? Why does "Nature" struggle? *Natura nititur*, answers Dr. Maudsley apparently, *quia est in illa virtus nititiva* (or, if any one prefers the form, *nitiva*); and after this he sneers at the *vertu soporifique*! Here is another striking passage:

It is imagination which attracts the lover to his mistress, by gilding her modest charms with the glow of the light that never shone on sea or land, and beguiles him into marriage, as into the sure promise of an earthly paradise; and he, notwithstanding that he is soon mightily disenchanted by experience, finds, in compensation, sober domestic

joys and does the procreant and prosaic work of the world. It seduces the politician by alluring thoughts of fame and glory and of benefits to his country, and inspires him to go through his arduous and often ignoble labours; what matters it that he discovers in no long time, if he is not a simple innocent, that fame is sounding vanity and glory an idle phantasm, since he has meanwhile done zealous work which he would never have done had he been disillusioned at the outset? It furnishes a plentiful supply of the preliminary hypotheses necessary in all branches of scientific research—those guesses at truth which great discoverers, like Kepler and Faraday, make in abundance in order to begin to look definitely for it, the erroneous ones, thrown aside as unfit after trial, being many times more numerous than those which verification proves to be well founded. It inspires the idealizations of the poet, by means of which he throws glammers of joy and beauty over the hard and dreary realities, and yields a glowing warmth to the aspirations of the heart which is denied to the cold light of reason. Lastly, attaining its most ambitious flights, it creates and peoples those unseen worlds to the joys of which so many nations in different times and places have looked forward for recompense and rest after the sufferings and labours of this life.

This is extremely eloquent; but again we ask, What is this description of Imagination but a statement in abstract terms of the fact that there are peculiarities of the human organization which Dr. Maudsley cannot in the least explain, and which he will not attribute to “the act of God”? We have as much objection as any one can have to bandying that name in argument; but really, if we have it translated into Nature and Nisus and Faculty and Function, and what not (Dr. Maudsley indulges in the astonishing remark that “the habit-formed structure will always feel the joy of function,” which, if we were Comtists, we should take as one of the most delightfully crude expressions of the metaphysical era of thought); if, we say, we are asked to believe that the monosyllable is not to be used because it can be translated into all sorts of dissyllables and trisyllables and polysyllables, we decline. *Hypotheses non sunt multiplicandæ præter necessitatem* any more than entities; and for our part we prefer the single and sufficient hypothesis of God.

We cannot follow up this argument, which is of wide, perhaps of universal, application. The universe of “natural” abstractions, each working *propter virtutem*, and not

caused by anything, which Dr. Maudsley prefers to the supernatural, or, speaking plainly, to belief in God, strikes us as a universe rather unreasonable to propose and singularly unreasonable to accept. But we cannot deal with all its phases as examined by Dr. Maudsley. We must leave others to decide whether good and bad luck are such absurd suppositions as Dr. Maudsley will have them to be in one place, and whether what he himself lays down in another, the "unconscious ingenuity with which certain natures, again incarnating the discordant doings and feelings of their forefathers, succeed in doing with the most apt inaptness the wrong thing at the wrong time," is not something much more absurd. Our author remarks somewhere that "the devout Christian will resent the insulting impiety of a natural explanation." We do not know; we are not at any rate un-Christian enough to arrogate to ourselves the title of devout Christians. But, if we are asked to believe in such a "Nature" as Dr. Maudsley's, we shall certainly resent the insulting explanation. The supernatural, at any rate, presents itself frankly as supernatural. It says, alike to intelligent unbelievers like Dr. Maudsley, to believers who may or may not be intelligent, and to the unquestionably unintelligent persons of the psychical-research kind, "I am not natural, and you can neither prove nor disprove me by natural means." Nature (Dr. Maudsley's Nature) says, "You will please to believe in a *nisus* and a function and a faculty, and all the rest of it, which are, indeed, absolutely inexplicable, but which are natural, quite natural, you know." "What right," says Dr. Maudsley, "have we to believe Nature under any sort of obligation to do her work by means of complete minds only? She may find an incomplete mind a more suitable instrument for a particular purpose." What attribute has the wildest supernaturalist ever given to the supernatural, or any synonym of it, which transcends the non-natural character of this "Nature" of Dr. Maudsley's?

Once, indeed, a glimmer, though only a glimmer, of the fatal paralogue which pervades his whole book strikes the author:

To the notorious objection that a direct communication from the Deity would be a violation of the laws of Nature, it is no real answer that the divine locution might take place in conformity with a higher law than the known laws of Nature, and be a temporary discontinuity, not really a violation of them—a special supersession of their function for the occasion; because a supernatural event occurring in Nature, in direct opposition to its known order, would be the temporary abolition of the known properties of things, and the utter confounding of human experience—of that same experience which alone is our authority for believing human testimony; not the mere interruption or suspension of known law, but the negation of all law based upon the uniformity of experience within its range. The very basis of natural knowledge would be swept away in that case; belief could never have the certainty that it was in conformity with experience, nor an instant's confidence as to what would come to pass next; it would be no matter thenceforth how many miracles, big or little, occurred, nor how often or how seldom they occurred: the universe would practically be a chaos, not a cosmos. If the law of gravitation can be suspended even for a second of time without the universe going to wreck, then it is clear that there is no law of gravitation at all.

We need only ask any one to read this, to see the strange fallacy which it indicates, and to which Dr. Maudsley, like all impugnors of the supernatural, placidly submits. Undoubtedly an interference with the laws of Nature would be a violation of them, if it were done by a natural authority. But the whole contention of supernaturalists, the whole theory of religion, the whole definition of God, to put plain things in plain words, is that the authority is not natural, that it is not limited by any natural limitations of power, and that it can not only make what is not natural happen, but can prevent it from having any such effects as Dr. Maudsley describes. If he or any one else chooses to say that he does not believe in omnipotence, he is logically entitled to do so. But to object to omnipotence that if it existed it would be omnipotent, appears to humble logicians a very absurd and a very inexcusable *petitio principii*. To put the whole thing shortly, Dr. Maudsley, like every other reasoner of his class whose reasonings we have ever read, bases his arguments on one simple objection, "You ascribe to God things that are not and could not be true of man."

We have no care to deny it.

If it should be objected that my criticism of Dr. Maudsley is too contemptuous, I can only reply that I do not see how else to deal with a most pretentious writer whose sentences are in scores of instances, which I have marked, mere unintelligible jargon; and, above all, whose very object it is, not calmly to discuss the doctrines of religion with a due regard to their enormous practical importance—whether true or false—but to hold all religion up to the *contempt* of his readers, as a mass of puerile absurdities which are not deserving of serious argument.

As to the rest of the Sermons in this volume, they must speak for themselves. Nobody can be better aware of their deficiencies than I am myself. Nevertheless, it seems to me that we are in a condition of controversy and doubt and unbelief, in which each should do his best, however poor that may be, to reassure the timid, and at least to testify to his own belief.

BALTIMORE, *September*, 1886.

REVELATION A NECESSARY CONDITION OF RELIGION.*

What advantage then hath the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God.—ROMANS iii. 1-2.

I propose during the Sunday mornings of Advent to direct your attention to a subject of the most serious importance, which it is the intellectual fashion of our time habitually to ignore or contemptuously to set aside. I propose to urge upon your attention, and, so far as I may be able, to demonstrate to you, the fact that Almighty God has been graciously pleased to impart to men—in many parts and in many ways—a continuous and harmonious series of *Revelations*: partly concerning Himself and His will; partly concerning our own nature and our relations to Himself and to each other; partly concerning our spiritual needs, our sins and frailties, and the provision He has made for our redemption and restoration to perfect communion with Himself; partly concerning events which were to happen in a far distant future; partly as to the spiritual significance of the ordinary processes of Nature and the course of history. And by *revelation* I do not mean a vague divine superintendence of our own intellectual operations; the gift to us of reason; the steady evolution of logic and the laws of thought;

* This and the next three Sermons were preached on the Sunday mornings of Advent, 1885.

the faculty of observing facts and phenomena and drawing legitimate inferences from them. I mean by *revelation* a direct divine communication to human spirits by which they were put in possession of truths which they could not otherwise have known; or received commandments which they were bound to obey, but which they could not otherwise have discovered. And I wish to help you to realize that these revelations are *a necessary condition of religion*: that if we deny them or set them aside, we shall have, in place of a genuine religion, a mere series of personal feelings with no objective foundation, which will come and go as our circumstances change or with the changing moods of our minds.

The season of Advent seems remarkably suitable for such reflections as these, because it is the very object of that Holy Season—coming at the very beginning of the Christian Year—to remind us that the whole course of our Christian life, whether as individuals or as a Church, assumes that God has *come to us*: has come not vaguely and generally, but definitely and specially; not indirectly by the ordinary operation of *our own* spirits, but directly by the operation of *His* Spirit *upon* ours. He comes to us, indeed, in ways innumerable, many of which we call *natural*—not because they do not imply a direct communion between Him and us, but because they are universal, common to all mankind. Thus He comes to us primarily in *Conscience*, which testifies to us irresistibly not only the existence of God, but also His righteousness, His supreme and absolute authority, and His certain judgment of us. And the testimony of conscience to God is, to say the very least, as perfect and irresistible

as the testimony of our senses to the reality of an external world. For our sensations are not themselves the external world: they are states of *our own minds*, and they compel us to believe in something external which produces them, chiefly because *they are not under our own control*. Thus, for instance, it must one day have happened that, for the first time, we observed a piece of white paper lying on a table: we noticed its form, colour, position, smoothness, hardness, weight; we experienced, in fact, a definite group or set of sensations. We had never seen a piece of white paper before, and inasmuch as one single group of sensations not associated as yet by contiguity or resemblance with any other group would awaken neither memory nor anticipation, we should have had no reason for expecting to see a piece of white paper again. But supposing by sheer accident we had passed fifty or sixty times near the same table, observed the same piece of white paper, and experienced therefrom the same definite group or set of sensations, how should we have explained this recurrence of feeling? Would the piece of white paper be in the least degree more real after we had seen it fifty times than it was when we saw it for the first time? If the belief in an external world be intuitive, we should have referred our sensations at once to the piece of white paper as an external object; but if it be acquired, the same result would have been arrived at, though by a slower process. We should have perceived that, though we might move away from the piece of paper, yet if we chose to be near it we were no longer masters of our own sensations. We should have found out that we were unable steadily to look at a thin, light, square piece of white paper, and

then experience the sensations of heaviness, and roundness, and thickness, and blueness. We should have come to feel: 'This piece of paper is as real as I am, and is external to myself. I do not take it away with me; it is not a group of sensations I can produce at will, whether the paper be present or absent; moreover, when it is present, it can compel me to experience a certain group of sensations, however much I may try not to experience them together. It is, therefore, not myself, it is not merely a group of my sensations, but a real, external object which is a cause of my sensations.'

In a precisely similar manner does conscience reveal God to us; force upon us the knowledge that *He is*, that *He is righteous*, and that *He will judge us*; and we cannot escape this knowledge, nor by any effort or ingenuity divest ourselves of it. Conscience—I am quoting Cardinal Newman*—

Conscience always involves the recognition of a living object, towards which it is directed. Inanimate things cannot stir our affections: these are correlative with persons. If, as is the case, we feel responsibility, are ashamed, are frightened, at transgressing the voice of conscience, this implies that there is one to whom we are responsible, before whom we are ashamed, whose claims upon us we fear. If, on doing wrong, we feel the same tearful, broken-hearted sorrow which overwhelms us on hurting a mother; if, on doing right, we enjoy the same sunny serenity of mind, the same soothing, satisfactory delight which follows on our receiving praise from a father, we certainly have within us the image of some person to whom our love and veneration look, in whose smile we find our happiness, for whom we yearn, towards whom we direct our pleadings, in whose anger we are troubled and waste away. These feelings in us are such as

**Grammar of Assent*, pp. 109–110. (Fifth Edition, London, 1881.)

require for their exciting cause an intelligent being : we are not affectionate towards a stone, nor do we feel shame before a horse or a dog ; we have no remorse or compunction on breaking mere human law ; yet, so it is, conscience excites all these painful emotions, confusion, foreboding, self-condemnation ; and, on the other hand, it sheds upon us a deep peace, a sense of security, a resignation, and a hope, which there is no sensible, no earthly object to elicit. “The wicked flees when no one pursueth” ; then why does he flee ? Whence his terror ? Who is it that he sees in solitude, in darkness, in the hidden chambers of his heart ? If the cause of these emotions does not belong to this visible world, the object to which his perception is directed must be supernatural and divine ; and thus the phenomena of conscience, as a dictate, avail to impress the imagination with the picture of a Supreme Governor, a Judge, holy, just, powerful, all-seeing, retributive, and is the creative principle of religion, as the moral sense is the principle of ethics.

Thus God reveals Himself to us primarily, absolutely and irresistibly in conscience ; and, as I said a moment ago, of the knowledge thus forced upon us we can by no ingenuity or strenuous effort of will for a single moment divest ourselves. Many people, indeed, think that they have achieved this impossible feat ; but it is manifest to all but themselves that they have accomplished no more than to change their mode of expressing the truth which they still assume at every step of their reasoning, and in every judgment they form on their own conduct or the conduct of others. But, in addition to this primary and universal revelation of Himself in conscience, God has so inwoven Himself in the regularities and adaptations of Nature, in the structure of human society, and in the course of history, that the primary revelation receives incessant and innumerable verifications at every turn. Thus the stability of natural “law,” the quiet routine of life,

the tender ministrations of love, the recuperative and restorative processes which hasten to make good the waste and heal the diseases to which we may be exposed, the steady progress of nations "without a history," or of individuals "whose biography would not be worth writing," assure us that the God *whom we know already* is immanent among us, never ceasing to protect and bless us, keeping in constant motion the vast machinery of life, and enabling us to move safely among its complicated and incalculable forces. And, on the other hand, when either the "draught of fishes" well-nigh breaks our nets, or when we are overtaken in a career of vice and folly and brought to cureless ruin; or, again, in the revolutions of empires, in a Reign of Terror, in the triumphs of a robust and patriotic people, in the slow decay and final disappearance of nations enervated by prosperity and demoralized by luxury—we cannot help perceiving that the God *whom we know already* is no mere force, or law, or working hypothesis to account for the first beginning of the universe, but a Mighty Being who acts or interposes by virtue of that mysterious power of which we find the image in *the human will*.

But coming into the most intimate contact with God in the solemn sanctuary of Conscience, knowing irresistibly His righteousness and His absolute rule over ourselves, anticipating with unalterable certitude His final judgment, finding innumerable and incessant verifications of our knowledge in every corner of Nature and experience, and in those countless adaptations which make Nature and life *a whole*—it is impossible that we should rest satisfied with so much knowledge and so little. Without further revelation our very

wisdom would be a kind of foolishness, our light but little better than “darkness visible,” our sense of duty and anticipation of judgment a dread despair. Knowing that God is, that He is righteous, that He will judge us, we cannot resist the belief, we cannot quench the hope, that he will give us some clearer—nay, some practically unmistakable—guidance in the conduct of our lives towards Himself. Nothing can possibly seem to us more natural, more probable, more all but certain—knowing so much of God already as we do—than that he should *reveal* His will and the truths necessary for our spiritual perfection, to chosen messengers; that He should provide for the preservation of these revelations in trustworthy records, or social and ecclesiastical institutions; that sooner or later He should give us a *perfect* revelation in One who should be able fully to declare to us both *Him* and *ourselves*; that He should store up for us this perfect revelation in permanent institutions, and propagate it to all mankind by the ministry of the Church. Beginning with the universal knowledge of God in conscience, these revelations, and the preservation and proclamation of them, are not only not incredible: it is utterly incredible that we should be left without them.

For religion, being the bond between God and ourselves, the recognition of our dependence upon Him and His supreme authority over us, must needs rest upon some genuine knowledge of *what God is, and what He requires us to be and to do*. It is not a series of personal feelings arising spontaneously; it does not consist of hopes, or musings, or aspirations, or desires. It must rest upon a sure foundation of fact; otherwise

it is no better than the raptures or horrors of a dream, no more solid and real than the mountains and valleys and sunlit pinnacles and towers that we sometimes fancy we can see in the clouds of the evening sky. Nor is it easy to conceive—unless the whole method of the divine procedure were, in the matter of religion, to be inverted—how a revelation should be given to us otherwise than by direct communication to comparatively few individuals, and by being entrusted, for its safe-keeping, to a comparatively limited portion of mankind. As the natural light of day is not a universal and uniform brilliance, coming we know not whence, but a light gathered up as it were into one focus, blazing forth from the sun, and reflected upon us, even when we cannot see the sun, from innumerable illuminated objects, so the light of divine truth was stored up in Israel, streams forth from Christ, and is reflected from the Church and from the Scriptures and from every enlightened soul. The divine love which gave us philosophy through the Greeks, the perfection of law and the art of governing through the Romans, bestowed on us the revelations of His will and of the truths necessary for our redemption from sin and our spiritual perfection through His chosen people, Israel.

It is urged, indeed, by many that the ordinary faculties of the human mind, the inquisitiveness of the intellect, the pleasure of speculation, the fascination of religion as an object of investigation, are sufficient to account for those doctrines or theories or practical rules which lie at the foundation of “the religions of the world.” But it is surely idle to search for a *cause* until our attention has been arrested by an *effect*. To torture our imaginations for the invention of some

possible force, and then to deduce from that hypothetical force a series of hypothetical results, is nothing better than a foolish waste of ingenuity. *If* we could find in every nation that has a recorded history a body of consistent, well-preserved, harmoniously developed moral and religious truth and precept, "shining more and more unto the perfect day," and then, as from the midday sun, irradiating the world; *if* we could find this, and find also that it did not even claim to have been produced by any supernatural revelation, any special and direct communication from Almighty God—*then*, indeed, there would be a *problem for solution*. As it is, we must invent not only the solution, but *the problem itself*. For it is notorious that, except in the religion of Israel perfected by Christianity, no such body of truth is anywhere to be found, and that in Israel it is always referred to a supernatural revelation. "The Sacred Books of the East" are now, in admirable translations, within easy reach of anybody who cares to study them. They have been studied with the greatest enthusiasm and assiduity. "Elegant extracts" from these venerable "Bibles" have been collected and published for the wonder and admiration of those strangely constituted minds which find a mysterious delight in persuading themselves that the blessings they enjoy are not really so precious as they were at first inclined to believe. But *why* are we at all surprised to find anything spiritual and sublime in these ancient documents? We are surprised because the "elegant extracts" are so "few and far between," just as we should be surprised to find a precious diamond in a heap of ashes. Who will seriously contend that these Sacred Books are really consistent and harmonious?

Who will deny that they are full of absurdities? Who will affirm that they contain a progressive revelation, every valuable part of which has been preserved even in the additions by which the earlier portions have been, in a measure, superseded? Is there any modern Buddhism which stands to the original Buddhism in the same relation in which the Sermon on the Mount stands to the Ten Commandments? The fact is that, *excluding* Israel, the natural faculties of man *have nowhere produced* a consistent, well-preserved, harmoniously progressive religion; while *in* Israel the truths and precepts of religion have invariably been referred to a special and supernatural revelation.

It is scarcely necessary to argue the *possibility* of a revelation on the divine side. "He that created the ear, shall He not hear? and He that made the eye, shall He not see?" He that gave us tongues, shall He not speak? Has the God who endowed us with faculties by means of which we can communicate with each other, tell our neighbor what he did not know before, and what he never could have known unless we had told him—has He so exhausted Himself in the act of creation that He has *fewer* faculties left than *we* possess? And has He doomed *Himself* to be dumb forever in order that *we* may speak?

But the possibility of a revelation is often denied on the assumption that *the supposed recipient of the revelation* could not distinguish the communications from without from the suggestions or inquiries or guesses of his own mind. But it is surely obvious that this is not a new objection, but only another way of putting the objection which I have just been considering. To deny that *God can make Himself heard*, is exactly the same thing

as to deny that *God can speak*. If He can make known His will to man, He can only do this on the supposition that man is able to receive the communication. If He really does speak to any chosen recipient of His message, it will certainly be as easy for that person to distinguish God's voice from his own thoughts, as to distinguish the voice of his father from the voice of his mother.

The inspired men of Israel, then, the recipients of divine revelations, had no doubt whatever of what had happened to them. *We*, who have never had their experience, may wonder at their confidence; just as people who do *not* know Greek may be perfectly satisfied that Greek literature is worthless. But it is safest to get our information from people who *do* know, rather than from those whose one qualification to instruct us is a confession of their own contemptuous ignorance. And, as the primary and universal revelation in conscience is verified by innumerable facts and experiences, so the revelations to the lawgivers, psalmists, prophets of Israel were verified both by individuals and by the nation. Many of the prophets were persecuted, rejected, even put to death; but their message was verified all the same. Ahab hated Micaiah, shut him up in prison, fed him "with the bread of affliction and the water of affliction"; but it was absolutely impossible either to silence or disbelieve him. "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord *besides*" these court chaplains? asks Jehoshaphat; and Micaiah must be brought forth. Moreover, we know the end of Ahab. Sophisticate as we may about the mode by which divine and irresistible truth has come to us, when it does come it "comes home" to us; and, when we try to resist

it, we know that we are resisting God. The prophets say, "Thus saith the Lord": our hearts and consciences respond, "No other could so have spoken to us." There may be false prophets, but we know the false ring of their voices. Hundreds of false prophets were against Micaiah in the days of Ahab; but nobody who really "wished to do the will of God" failed to "know of the doctrine."

But it is not enough that a revelation should be *given*: it must also be *protected*. If the revelation be gradual and continuous, the earlier portions must be assimilated before the later portions are bestowed. The early Church Fathers spoke of a "dispensation of paganism," of philosophy as a "schoolmaster to bring men to Christ." But whatever may have been the value of philosophy, and however genuine may have been the fragments of divine truth to be discovered in heathen religions, their spiritual power was dissipated for want of some protective envelope. The evolution of heathenism was always in the wrong direction—in the direction of corruption; and the speculations of philosophers were neither authoritative, nor in a form adapted for practical use. It is characteristic of the revelation which is at the foundation of the religion of Israel that it was stored partly in those written records which make up, taken all together, the Old Testament Scriptures; and partly in national and ecclesiastical institutions, which were themselves in a large degree directly commanded by God, and a description of which forms also a large part of the same sacred writings. It is this fact which gives a supreme and authoritative value to the Bible to which no other literature can make the slightest pretension.

I cannot better express this than in the words of one who combines in a highly exceptional degree with accurate learning the best qualities of a popular writer; and who can by nobody be suspected of any undue bias in the direction of what is sometimes called *Bibliolatry*. The practical point, says Dr. Robertson Smith,*

in all controversy as to the distinctive character of the revelation of God to Israel regards the place of Scripture as the permanent rule of faith and the sufficient and unfailing guide in all our religious life. When we say that God dealt with Israel in the way of special revelation, and crowned His dealings by personally manifesting all His grace and truth in Christ Jesus the incarnate Word, we mean that the Bible contains within itself a perfect picture of God's gracious relations with man, and that we have no need to go outside of the Bible history to learn anything of God and His saving will towards us—that the whole growth of the true religion up to its perfect fullness is set before us in the record of God's dealing with Israel, culminating in the manifestation of Jesus Christ. There can be no question that Jesus Christ Himself held this view; and we cannot depart from it without making Him an imperfect teacher and an imperfect Saviour. Yet history has not taught us that there is anything in true religion to add to the New Testament. We still stand in the nineteenth century where He stood in the first, or rather He stands as high above us as He did above His disciples, the perfect Master, the supreme Head of the fellowship of all true religion.

It is a bold thing, therefore, to affirm that we have any need to seek a wider historical foundation for our faith than sufficed Him whose disciples we are, and I apprehend that the apparent difficulty of the supposition that the whole course of revelation

* *The Prophets of Israel*, etc., pp. 10-13 (Scribner's Edition, 1882). However reasonably we may hesitate to accept many of Dr. Smith's hypotheses, it is impossible to read his *Lectures* without profit and a very keen enjoyment.

transacted itself in the narrow circle of a single nation is not so great as it appears at first sight. For it is not necessary to suppose that God gave no true knowledge of Himself to seekers after truth among the Gentiles. The New Testament affirms, on the contrary, that the nations were never left without some manifestation of that which may be known of God (Rom. i. 19 ; Acts xvii. 27) ; and the thinkers of the early Church gave shape to this truth in the doctrine of the *λόγος σπερματικός*—the seed of the Divine Word scattered through all mankind.

But, while all right thoughts of God in every nation come from God Himself, it is plain that a personal knowledge of God and His will—and without personal knowledge there can be no true religion—involves a personal dealing of God with men. Such personal dealing again necessarily implies a special dealing with chosen individuals. To say that God speaks to all men alike, and gives the same communication directly to all without the use of a revealing agency, reduces religion to mysticism. In point of fact it is not true in the case of any man that what he believes and knows of God has come to him directly through the voice of nature and conscience. All true knowledge of God is verified by personal experience. There is a positive element in all religion, an element which we have learned from those who went before us. If what is so learned is true, we must ultimately come back to a point in history when it was new truth, acquired as all new truth is by some particular man or circle of men, who, as they did not learn it from their predecessors, must have got it by personal revelation from God Himself. To deny that Christianity can ultimately be traced back to such acts of revelation, taking place at a definite time in a definite circle, involves in the last resort a denial that there is any true religion at all, or that religion is anything more than a vague subjective feeling. If religion is more than this, the true knowledge of God and His saving will must in the first instance have grown up in a definite part of the earth, and in connection with the history of a limited section of mankind. For if revelation were not to be altogether futile, it was necessary that each new communication of God should build on those which had gone before, and therefore that it should be made

within that society which had already appropriated the sum of previous revelations. Some true knowledge of God might exist outside of this society, but at all events there must have been a society of men possessed of the whole series of divine teachings in a consecutive and adequate form. And under the conditions of ancient life this society could not be other than a nation, for there was then no free communication and interchange of ideas such as now exists between remote parts of the globe. Until the Greek and Roman empires broke up the old barriers of nationality, the intellectual and moral life of each ancient people moved in its own channel, receiving only slight contributions from the outside. There is nothing unreasonable, therefore, in the idea that the true religion was originally developed in national form within the people of Israel; nay, this limitation corresponds to the historical conditions of the problem.

But the written records of divine revelations throughout the whole history of Israel, and especially at the very beginning of that history, were exceedingly scanty, and were scarcely at all available directly for the whole body of the people. We find it excessively difficult—most of us find it absolutely impossible—to realize in any vivid way a condition of society in which there were no books and no readers; in which almost all instruction was oral, and memory took the place of printing. In such a state of society, though written records were of inestimable value and even absolutely necessary, they were at the same time, taken alone, wholly inadequate for the protection and dissemination of religious truth. That truth was preserved for general practical purposes in an altogether different way—viz.: by rites and ceremonies, by a religious *cultus*, by fasts and festivals, by sacrifices and a priesthood. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt, the redeeming love of their God, His direct personal intervention for their salvation, His claim upon their

obedience—all this may have been affirmed in written records; but the records were not within the reach of those who most needed to be reminded of these primary facts. The divine method of instructing the great body of the people can be best expressed in the words of the book *Exodus*. Not a parchment roll, but *the Feast of the Passover*, was “the Bible” of Israel: “And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses.” The Feast of the Passover was instituted not only as a religious service, in which each family or each individual Israelite should gratefully renew his covenant with Jehovah, and realize afresh the infinite and eternal love in whose shelter it was his inestimable privilege to abide, but also as a *Record of Revelation*, a permanent instruction as to historic facts and their moral and spiritual significance. And this mode of instruction will be always necessary, as I shall try to show you in a later sermon during this season of Advent. In modern times it is rendered necessary not by the scantiness, but by the abundance of literature; by the deluge of printed matter which scarcely rises to the level of literature; and by the restless curiosity and illimitable speculation of the human mind. *No* religion has been preserved without a *cultus*, a ceremonial, a hierarchy, an organization, and to this law the Christian religion is most assuredly no exception. Of this law the Christian religion is the most conspicuous example.

Even with the aid of printed books men are slow

learners; and in moral and spiritual truth they are also reluctant learners. They must have "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little." And the revelation of God to Israel was gradual, progressive, harmonious; and, that it might be this, each lesson had to be well learned. Some learned the lesson sooner than others. They were, therefore, prepared for further instruction; and, when the time was fully come, the further instruction was imparted. But the old did not cease to be true because it was imperfect: it was included and preserved in the complete revelation. Let us consider two examples of this at once conservative and progressive teaching: the practice and doctrine of sacrifice, and the effect of the sin of the fathers upon the condition and welfare of their children.

Sacrifice is a part of the practical expression of all known religions. There have been earnest reformers who have been, for various reasons, shocked and disgusted by what seemed to them the waste of life and the pain of sentient creatures involved in sacrifice. These reformers have, in a very few instances, had a force of personal character which enabled them to persuade vast multitudes of people to discontinue sacrifice, and, for the same reasons, to abstain from animal food, and to walk warily over the very grass lest they should crush an insect. But when the personal force of these great teachers was spent, sacrifice was resumed; or some other form of self-immolation or offering was substituted for sacrifice which was of essentially the same nature. These highly exceptional cases—so far as they really are exceptional—may be left out of consideration.

Of course it is easy enough to ridicule sacrifice, as implying a very low theology—the belief that in form and in passions God is made in *our* own image. The Homeric gods feasting with “the blameless Ethiopians,” are very different from the God whom Isaiah or St. John saw in their visions. But, for my own part, I believe that the grossest superstitions are not only, for the most part, morally better, but even nearer to the absolute and literal truth concerning God than materialism and atheism. Supposing sacrifice were the outward expression of the belief that divine beings, superior to ourselves and having power over us, and some sort of rightful claim upon our obedience and service, were pleased with banquets, with the flesh of slain beasts and the fragrance of incense, this would be much nearer the truth than the belief that there is no God at all, or that God cares nothing for us—that He is equally indifferent to our homage and contempt. The first lesson for us to learn is the *reality* of God, that He requires our service, that He will call us to account for our sins. The religion of Israel not only did not originate sacrifices, but rather restrained them. They were not to be multiplied to suit the caprice of individuals: they were to be of a particular kind and quality, offered at particular times and places, by particular individuals set apart for that office. But in Israel *they meant this*: We are wholly dependent upon God; we must respond to His grace by our love; we must prove the sincerity of our love by actual service; we must confess our sins to Him, and gratefully adopt the means which He provides for reconciliation to Himself and restored communion with His people. These were the lessons to be inwoven into the daily life, into the hearts and consciences of the people of

Israel. They had no books available. The lessons were *object-lessons*. As such, they were at once true and incomplete; but because they were true they were to be learned; also, because they were incomplete, they were to be learned, and thoroughly learned, as the indispensable preparation for fuller knowledge. When the lesson itself had been laid to heart and made a part of the moral and intellectual nature of the people, prophet after prophet came to show them its innermost meaning; to warn them against mistaking the form for the substance; to prepare them for that day when "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us."

Another example of the conservative development of the religion of Israel is to be found in the commentary of Ezekiel on a portion even of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were the very central revelation of human duty bestowed upon Israel. The *text* upon which Ezekiel commented was the familiar passage in what we call the Second Commandment: "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." These words were true in the days of Moses, and they are true now. Nobody can sin for himself alone. He is sure to involve in the calamity which *he deserves*, and which *to him* is a direct *punishment*, everybody with whom he is at all intimately related. This is not a fact because it is declared in Scripture, but it is declared in Scripture because it is a fact of universal experience. And it was of the utmost possible importance that the Israelites should have this fact rooted in their memories: it was *a fact*, however foolishly they might explain it, and it was incalculably better to explain it foolishly than altogether to forget or neglect it. This

was better for them, and would be better for us and for all men. But in the time of Ezekiel men had begun to anticipate the modern scientific doctrine of "heredity" and "moral insanity." As many of our physicians and scientific instructors know nothing of theft, or drunkenness, or murder, but only of kleptomania, or dipsomania, or homicidal mania; as they investigate, not a man's conscience and habits, but his family history; so, in the days of Ezekiel, people were saying: 'It is not *our* fault that we are wicked and miserable: we inherit our vices and our distress: "the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."' So it was necessary for the prophet to distinguish between suffering and punishment; and to remind God's people that each individual soul had its own priceless value in the eyes of Jehovah; that God would deal with every man according to his own works; that "the soul that sinneth *it* shall die." Thus throughout the history of Israel the chosen people received *revelations* through special messengers chosen of God; these revelations were recorded in written Scriptures; they were embodied in national and ecclesiastical institutions, in a *cultus*, in rites and ceremonies, fasts and feasts, sacrifices and priests. When they had been inwoven into the habits, the very nature, of the people, new revelations were given, at once conservative and progressive. Hence the religion of Israel was never lost and was never stagnant. And even now it is true that Christ Himself came "not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them"; and that the Bible is "the statesman's manual"; and the prophets of Israel are the prophets of the whole human race—for "unto them were entrusted the oracles of God."

THE REVELATION OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST.*

God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in a Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds . . . the effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance.
—HEBREWS i. 1-3.

I was reminding you last Sunday morning that a direct revelation from God Himself to man is at the foundation of all true religion ; that religion does not consist of spontaneous desires, or curious speculations, or vivid emotions, or logically constructed theories, or modes of conduct suggested by prudence, but is based upon a reality and a truth, which we may deny, indeed, but which we cannot make other than they are. We are, of course, perfectly familiar with the fact that *we* did not invent *our own* religion, whatever that religion may be : we were “ born and bred ” in it. We accepted and believed it long before we had either the power or the inclination to verify or examine it. We received it by tradition on authority, though we may have forgotten by whom it was handed on to us, and though their authority may have been no more or higher than that of parents or teachers or elders. It is conceivable that we might, in process of time and in favourable circumstances, have “ thought out for ourselves ”

* Preached on the second Sunday in Advent, 1885.

much of what we now accept without further need of inquiry. But, as a matter of fact, our religion did not come to us in that way. It was revealed to us by other people, whencesoever *they* may have derived it. Nearly the whole of what we have done for ourselves is not discovery, but verification; and the verification would neither have been attempted nor possible but for the primary instruction to which it is applied. The most that we can say is like what her fellow-townpeople said to the woman of Samaria: "From that city many of the Samaritans believed on Jesus. . . . And many more believed because of His word: and they said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy speaking: for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world." Nevertheless, but for her "speaking" they could never "have heard for themselves."

But, sooner or later, we come to a point in the history of religious truth when this or that part of it appears *for the first time*.* There has been no previous tradition; the new truth produces a more or less violent revolution; it is the starting-point of a new life, in individuals, in nations. There are some who can persuade themselves that this can be easily accounted for. They say, "The air was full of it"; was charged with electricity; and lo! a man taller than the rest appears, and the lightning flashes out. Or society has been long saturated with the truth; the solvent fluid has been slowly evaporating; and lo! some otherwise insignificant person puts in, it may be, a mere finger and we have the crystals. But the weakness of this theory is that there is not a single

* See the passage quoted from Dr. Robertson Smith on p. 13.

atom of evidence—in the really important and crucial instances—that the air *was* so charged or society so saturated. Were the tribes of Israel, debased by slavery in Egypt, saturated with the Mosaic law; or, later, with the spiritual truths proclaimed by the prophets? How, then, does it happen that they were continually relapsing into idolatry, and that their noblest prophets were hated and persecuted and slain? “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! Thou that *killest* the prophets, and *stonest* them that are sent unto thee!” Was Galilee or Jerusalem “saturated” with the truth which “crystallized” in Jesus of Nazareth? Men “were *astonished* at His teaching”; for a short time they admired; then they doubted, hated, denied, and gave their final verdict in the cry, “Not this man, but Barabbas.” In the inner circle of Christ’s disciples His teaching was a bewildering mystery; outside that circle the “Christ” with which society was saturated crystallized in *the Apocryphal Gospels*, and in heresies so grotesque that it is difficult not to refute but to understand them.

The prophets themselves declared that they had received the new truths they proclaimed from God Himself. *If that were so*, they must certainly have known it. Nor is it any disproof of what they declared that *we* have received *no* direct revelations. At any rate, the only alternative is that the prophets were men of subtle intellect, of wide culture—I might almost add of a crazed enthusiasm. They were so possessed by the truth which they had discovered that they found doubt impossible; and affirmed their own certitude under the disguise of a supernatural revelation. This hypothesis would begin to be credible *if* the prophets had been such men, *if* they had possessed that unshaken

certitude as to *their own opinions*; but we know from the records which are the *only* source of our knowledge even of the existence of these prophets, that they were far other men. The *Book of the Prophet Jeremiah* alone is the conclusive disproof of all these ingenious theories. Take his own account of what we may consider his "call" to the work of a prophet (i. 4-10):

Now the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child; for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid because of them: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth: see, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.

And now let us hear his own account of his prophetic work (viii. 18-ix. 2):

Oh that I could comfort myself against sorrow! my heart is faint within me. Behold, the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people from a land that is very far off: Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her King in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities? The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt: I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my

people! Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.

And again (xv. 10-18):

Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have not lent on usury, neither have men lent to me on usury; yet every one of them doth curse me. The Lord said, Verily I will strengthen thee for good; verily I will cause the enemy to make supplication unto thee in the time of evil and in the time of affliction.

Can one break iron, even iron from the north, and brass? Thy substance and thy treasures will I give for a spoil without price, and that for all thy sins, even in all thy borders. And I will make them to pass with thine enemies into a land which thou knowest not: for a fire is kindled in Mine anger which shall burn upon you.

O Lord, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and avenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in Thy long-suffering: know that for Thy sake I have suffered reproach. Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts. I sat not in the assembly of them that make merry, nor rejoiced: I sat alone because of Thy hand; for Thou hast filled me with indignation. Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? wilt Thou indeed be unto me as a deceitful brook, as waters that fail?

And again (xvii. 12-18):

A glorious throne, set on high from the beginning, is the place of our sanctuary. O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake Thee shall be ashamed; they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters. Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for Thou art my praise.

Behold, they say unto me, Where is the word of the Lord? let it come now. As for me, I have not hastened from being a shepherd after Thee; neither have I desired the woeful day; Thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was before Thy face. Be not a terror unto me: Thou art my refuge in the day of evil. Let them be ashamed that persecute me, but let not me be ashamed; let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed; bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction.

And once again (xx. 7-18):

O Lord, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am become a laughing-stock all the day, every one mocketh me. For as often as I speak I cry out; I cry, Violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord is made a reproach unto me, and a derision, all the day. And if I say, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name, then there is in mine heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain. For I have heard the defaming of many, terror on every side. Denounce, and we will denounce him, say all my familiar friends, they that watch for my halting; peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him. But the Lord is with me as a mighty one and a terrible; therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail; they shall be greatly ashamed, because they have not dealt wisely, even with an everlasting dishonour which shall never be forgotten. But, O Lord of hosts, that triest the righteous, that seest the reins and the heart, let me see Thy vengeance on them; for unto Thee have I revealed my cause. Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord: for He hath delivered the soul of the needy from the hand of evil-doers.

Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad. And let that man be as the cities which the Lord overthrew, and repented not:

and let him hear a cry in the morning, and shouting at noon-tide; because he slew me not from the womb; and so my mother should have been my grave, and her womb always great. Wherefore came I out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?

Are these the words of a man whose doctrine was "in the air"; who simply gave eloquent expression to what everybody was already thinking? Are these the words of a subtle speculator, a mystic dreamer, a great moral discoverer? Is this a man fired with a passionate enthusiasm for his own opinions, and determined, with the intellectual heroism of which we have so many examples, at all cost to proclaim them? Most unmistakably, such questions answer themselves. Jeremiah at any rate *believed* that he was sent and instructed *by God*. He feared and hoped, was bold and timid, believed and doubted, suffered excruciating agony, was distracted by the love of his people and his horror at their wickedness and his sure foresight of their doom; and he was kept steadily to his work, he was enabled to resist his enemies and to rise above the contradictions of his own heart and mind, only by the absolute certainty that *God* had sent him, and that he was speaking not the thoughts of his own heart, but the message of the Eternal.

But it is included in the very idea of revelation that, while it comes *from God*, it is given *to men*, and disseminated by men. In other words, it is limited by human receptivity, by the powers and faculties of human nature; nay more, by the powers and faculties of the particular person to whom, at any particular time and in any particular place, it was supposed to be actually imparted. Not only was it impossible to reveal to S. John everything that God Himself knows,

but it would have been impossible to reveal to Moses everything which was actually revealed to S. John. And it has sometimes been seriously argued that this fact renders any genuine and authoritative revelation wholly impossible. The object of a revelation is to give us accurate knowledge of the very truth concerning God and ourselves. But this, it is urged, is impossible because of the limitation of the human faculties themselves, and much more impossible because of the special limitation of the faculties of any particular person. Every rational theology recognizes that God, in His very nature and in all His attributes, infinitely surpasses not only any one prophet, but the whole human race. No multiplication of the finite can produce the infinite; and not only our actual, but any possible, knowledge must fall so far short of the truth concerning God that our most careful and reverent utterances can be little less (except, indeed, in intention) than an awful blasphemy. This is scarcely a caricature of the argument of Dean Mansel's celebrated *Bampton Lectures*. But surely it implies that we cannot *know anything* of any object unless we can know it *wholly*; and, unless we are to change the meaning of the commonest words of every language, so strange an assumption needs no more for its refutation than to be clearly stated. The words equivalent to *I know* are to be found in all languages, and they certainly have *some* meaning. They cannot possibly be equivalent to the words *I do not know*. But what single object is there which we know *wholly*? If we are once *out of our depth*, we can be drowned as easily with three feet of water below our feet as if we were sinking into an unfathomable abyss.

And if we affirm that we can know nothing unless we know it *wholly*, when are we not out of our depth? We need not begin with the mysteries of theology: let us take a common pebble, lying by mere chance on a smooth pavement. All sorts of people may come into contact with this little pebble, and will say they "know" it; and their words will convey a sufficiently definite and accurate meaning to those to whom they speak. A delicate lady will say, "This pebble hurt my foot." A mischievous schoolboy will rejoice in the pebble as a convenient missile for breaking the window of an unoffending neighbour. A lapidary will observe that it is capable of a high polish, and may be used for what people call "jewelry." A chemist will analyze it, and tell us of what elements it is composed, and how they are combined. A geologist will look at it, and it will reveal to him the history of countless millenniums: intense heat, enormous pressure, volcanic action, the grinding of icebergs, the washings of long-vanished seas. But if the little pebble itself could speak and tell its own history, what mere foolishness all our wisest "historical fictions" about it would seem! But *how* would they seem foolish? They would seem foolish *only* if we had offered them as a complete and exhaustive account of the pebble. We do not so offer them; and meanwhile it is true that the lady *knew* that the pebble hurt her foot; the lapidary that he polished it; the chemist that he analyzed it; the geologist that he constructed its hypothetical and, in a degree, its certain history. If we do not sufficiently, and for all practical purposes, *know* a little round pebble, we know nothing whatever.

But do we *know* our fellow-creatures? Do we know

our next-door neighbour? Do we know our father and mother, our brothers and sisters? Is there a single human being who would hesitate to answer these questions with an emphatic *yes*? But do we know any one of these *wholly*? If we cannot *wholly* know a mere pebble, how much less can we know a human being! We do not wholly know ourselves. For the most part we do not care for self-knowledge.

But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
 But often, in the din of strife,
 There rises an unspeakable desire
 After the knowledge of our buried life ;
 A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
 In tracking out our true, original course ;
 A longing to inquire
 Into the mystery of this heart which beats
 So wild, so deep in us—to know
 Whence our thoughts come and where they go.
 And many a man in his own breast then delves,
 But deep enough, alas ! none ever mines.
 And we have been on many thousand lines,
 And we have shown, on each, spirit and power,
 But hardly have we, for one little hour,
 Been on our own line, have we been ourselves—
 Hardly had skill to utter one of all
 The nameless feelings that course through our breast,
 But they course on forever unexpress'd.
 And long we try in vain to speak and act
 Our hidden self, and what we say and do
 Is eloquent, is well—but 'tis not true !
 And then we will no more be rack'd
 With inward striving, and demand
 Of all the thousand nothings of the hour
 Their stupefying power ;
 Ah, yes ; and they benumb us at our call !
 Yet still, from time to time, vague and forlorn,
 From the soul's subterranean depth upborne,

As from an infinitely distant land,
Come airs, and floating echoes, and convey
A melancholy into all our day.*

And if we scarcely know, and only fitfully try to know, our own selves, how much less do we wholly know our neighbour, our most intimate and dearest friend! Am I, then, going beyond my depth when I say that my next-door neighbour is John Smith; that he has fair hair and blue eyes; that he is a physician; that he is clever and benevolent; and when I affirm an indefinite number of other similar truths? Are not these truths *at all*, because they do not sound the depths of Smith's personality, and affirm more of him than he knows of himself?

The revelation of God, then, may be true and of the utmost practical value, even though it does not, and never can, surpass the capacity of human nature to receive it. At the same time the ordinary instruments of divine revelation have been so imperfect, even at the best, that their very imperfection suggested the need and inspired the hope that, some time or other, God would provide a true and perfect prophet. The prophets of Israel were men of very limited knowledge, and entrusted severally with but a very small part of that truth which is necessary to human perfection. The institutions in which their revelations were enshrined, and by means of which they were protected and disseminated, were rigid and unyielding. Exactly because they were so admirably adapted to preserve the old, they became more and more incapable of making room for the new; at last they became exclusive and antagonistic. Moreover, the human frailty of prophets,

* Matthew Arnold: *The Buried Life*.

and priests, and kings, seems often to contradict the very truth which they were called by God to proclaim and to administer. Moses "spake unadvisedly with his lips." Aaron made the golden calf. David found in his own life material only too ample for his penitential-Psalms. Solomon "loved many strange women, and when he was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods." Jonah did his best to defeat the purpose of divine mercy which he was commissioned to execute. The very priests desecrated the temple and set at naught the law. It is indeed by the very revelations they received and recorded that their own conduct is condemned; but their contemporaries were at least as familiar with their life as with their message, and were only too likely to corrupt the one by the impurity of the other. The object of revelation is twofold: to declare what God is, and what man ought to be. The first of these objects was far too great for the knowledge of the prophets of Israel, the second was far too great for their virtue. Nor did the long history of human thought and human life, whether within or beyond the limits of the chosen people, encourage the faintest reasonable hope that there would ever appear among men a prophet either wise enough or good enough to be the perfect medium of a perfect revelation.

Therefore, *God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son . . . the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His Substance.* Any revelation of God to man must be brought within the limits of human nature and human capacity to receive it; but within those limits it must be perfect if it is effectually to

make known to us both what God is and what man ought to be. The Incarnation, considered merely as a revelation, satisfies both these conditions.

Viewed, then, solely as a revelation, what does the Incarnation of the Son of God include? It includes at least this: that, in order that we might know God, and our relations to Him, and all that can be necessary for our spiritual perfection, the Eternal Son Himself came to teach us; to speak to us in our own language, by a perfect human life, by means of facts and analogies which are on the level of our own experience. Even the miracles of Christ were within human experience: people did actually eat of the multiplied loaves, were personally conscious that they had ceased to be blind, showed "themselves to the priest" after they were cleansed from leprosy, unwound the grave-clothes from a risen brother. And as a teacher our Lord at least *claimed* a perfect and personal knowledge of what He taught; and also that to teach the truth was a large part of the work which He came from the Father to do.

The comprehension of the mystery of the Incarnation—that is to say, the accurate knowledge of *the whole of it*—including, as it does, the yet deeper mystery of the Holy Trinity, is very far beyond the reach of the human faculties. But *that part* of the perfect truth which it is practically necessary for us to know *is* within our reach: millions of human beings have actually known it and lived by it; and the fact that they *could* live by it, that it satisfied their wants, that it fitted in with everything else of which they had the most irresistible certainty, that it harmonized what otherwise would have been irreconcilable contradictions, that it made

those who believed it morally and spiritually nobler, that it gave them more reverence for truth and a keener sense of responsibility, that it at once ennobled and humbled them—all this enabled, or even compelled, them to believe that what they could not understand, what grew fainter and fainter as they strained their eager gaze towards the ever-receding horizon till it was lost in an intolerable brightness, was real and substantial. But, as I said before, when once we are beyond our depth, it matters little how deep may be the abyss beneath us; and it is worth while to remember that the mystery of *creation* is as far beyond our perfect comprehension as the mystery of the Incarnation.

Whenever we indulge in speculation without protecting ourselves by the verification of facts and experience, we almost invariably discover that we have proved, beyond possibility of doubt, the inconceivableness of something which the very next minute we find before our very eyes. A man crosses the street at some particular time and place. The chances against the probability that he should have crossed exactly then and there are millions to one. We argue the matter out in our minds. We feel sure that he must have crossed, if at all, a little higher up or a few minutes sooner. But lo! there he is: not taking the nearest way, nor attending to his business with the utmost possible expedition, but simply baffling our calculations by an absurd wilfulness. If we argue simply from the "Idea" of God, we should conclude with irresistible certainty that He neither could nor would bring into existence a single creature. For, indeed, *why* should He create? He is already in perfect blessedness; no increase can come to His infinite joy; He cannot

become wiser than He is so as to amend the conditions, if we may so speak, in which He is placed. Nay, there are no such conditions, and unless *He* shall have changed, *they* cannot become desirable. Before creation there exists nothing *outside* Himself which *could* change His purpose or constitute a motive to action; and, being already perfect, any change *within* Himself must be a change for the worse, which the very "Idea" of God excludes. Clearly enough, then, creation is impossible, a "contradiction in terms," excluded by the very "Idea" of God. So much for our speculation: then we bethink ourselves that *we* are speculating; that we are *not God*; that we *have actually been brought into existence*; that the fact that we ourselves are speculating about the possibility of creation absolutely disproves the conclusion at which we have so logically arrived.

Or we might approach the matter from another side—if it be another. How, we might ask, can the Almighty God *limit* in any way His power? Being, *in His very nature and essence*, omnipotent, how *can He* become weak? If we could discover any other existing object which could put Him to a choice between two alternatives, and compel Him to accept either the one or the other, He would be no longer God. Can anything be more obvious, so long as we remain in the region of mere speculation? But something hurts our foot, and we pick up a little pebble. It is plainly enough hard, impenetrable: it will not suffer our foot to occupy the same space which itself occupies. If it were endowed with an irreverent reason, it might say even to the Almighty, "I compel You to choose between these alternatives; You must annihilate

me, or I will hurt the foot of everybody who treads upon me." So we are landed in the absurdity of believing that *every exercise of power is a positive proof that the power has no existence.*

Of course you see that I am not attempting to *prove* the Incarnation of the Son of God; neither am I attempting to prove the existence of myself, or of a pebble. If there be any fact of history of which we may be rationally certain, such a fact is the life, and death, and resurrection, the claims and teaching, of Jesus Christ. It is as idle to argue against the possibility of His having ever lived as to argue against the Gallic Wars of Cæsar. To account for the words and works of Jesus on the hypothesis that He was a good man, like S. John or Buddha, is a kind of insult to the human understanding. Claiming what He did claim, He cannot have been a good man unless He were infinitely more. That in Him human nature came to "its perfect bloom," is a horticultural metaphor which may be safely regarded as too contemptible for grave argument. Every florist knows that "the perfect bloom" of to-day may be little better than the wild-flower of the very next season; and we have not yet seen any improvement upon either the life or the teaching of Him who declared that He was the very Son of God. But what I want to urge upon you is, that the argument against the Incarnation founded upon the supposed fact that it would be a *limiting* of the Divine Nature, must remain forever irrelevant so long as there is a single pebble that can hurt your foot. There is nothing illimitable but *nonentity*. We cannot divest ourselves of the knowledge of God by juggling with such words as "infinite" and "absolute."

Whether He is able and willing to create a world, is determined at once by the undeniable fact that here the world verily is. And if what we call the Divine Perfection renders it impossible for God to act, or even—for so far the argument would carry us—to be conscious of His own existence, then it follows, *not* that we must regard Nature and our very selves as mere illusions, but that we must put a new meaning into the word “perfection.” In truth, we must rescue the word from mere logical wrangling and recover for it its homely and obvious significance.

And, similarly, when we consider the Incarnation merely as a *revelation*, that revelation, let it amount to what it will, is at the least an undeniable fact. Jesus Christ, both by word and deed, has, beyond all dispute, taught men *something* concerning God. And what He has taught us at once preserves and completes all previous teaching. It appeals at once to the primary revelation in conscience, verifies that revelation, expands it, perfects it. Though so vastly higher and deeper, it is yet in such manifest harmony with the message of the prophets of Israel, and the institutions by which the truth they delivered was preserved, that it has been seriously argued that it is no more than their natural outgrowth. On the other hand, it is itself so unapproachable in fulness, and beauty, and applicability to all human conditions—so absolutely unblemished by any moral or spiritual infirmity or evil in the Teacher Himself—that the whole of it was never anticipated even by all previous teachers put together; and has never been even improved, much less superseded, by nearly twenty centuries of human progress. A natural outgrowth is part of a *continuous*

process; it may be in advance of the past, but it will be in the rear of the future. Nor will it be contended that there has been any arrest of human progress in any other department of thought or work. This is, indeed, our loudest boast: "Westward—ho!" Ever onwards. The goal of to-day the starting-point of to-morrow. Always some fresh discovery, some new invention, till we are rendered almost incapable of wonder and beyond surprise. Vast accumulations of facts unsuspected for millenniums, and the scientific arrangement of these facts, and the deduction of their "laws." How, then, does it happen that no new and greater teacher has arisen, in this continuous process of natural evolution, not only to eclipse but even to dim the exceeding brightness of Jesus of Nazareth? He still remains *the Master*. Theology is a mere commentary on His teaching; and, invaluable though it be, it is so far from improving the text that its remote inferences and subtle dogmas have to be continually verified or corrected by the "simplicity that is in Christ." They who, rightly or wrongly, affirm that even the Church is corrupt, and that the doctrines of modern Christendom are unbelievable, offer no new revelation, no original speculations. They think they have almost proved their case by putting it into the shape of a sarcastic question: "Was *Christ* a *Christian*?" Offer what explanation we can or will, this great Teacher, who declares Himself the Son of God, is, on all hands, admitted to be to this day unapproachable in His perfection as the Revealer of God and the Guide of human life. The explanation of the writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* has at least this merit—that, if it be true, it does most assuredly

explain. The Great Revealer has no superior and no fellow, because "He is the effulgence of God's glory and the express image of His substance."

If it be true! My dear brethren, in these sad days, when the air is heavy with the narcotic vapours of doubt; when clamorous denial well-nigh deafens us; when so much even of what seems to be intended for Christian teaching is made up of timid apologies and a minimizing theology; when, instead of the Christ of history, we are asked to believe in an imaginary Christ, whose *life* is constructed out of ingenious selections from the Four Gospels accommodated to "modern thought"—it seems to me that it is one of our most obvious and peremptory duties, and also one of our highest privileges, to testify in plain words that cannot possibly admit of being misunderstood, what we do verily believe. I could not dare to judge others, but for my own part—remembering the controversies out of which it arose and which it was meant to settle—I cannot see that it would be possible *for me* to recite the Nicene Creed without believing that the words of the author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* are true, and that the Great Revealer is in very fact "the effulgence of God's glory and the express image of His substance." I do verily believe that Jesus Christ was not *a* Son of God, but the "Only-begotten, begotten of His Father before all worlds." I believe, *not* that He is "the perfect blossoming of humanity," but that He is "of one substance with the Father." I believe that He was not the product of a continuous process of natural evolution, but that by Him "all things were made"; and that He is the Creator and not the creature of human development. I believe that when we hear

Him we hear the Father, and that He speaks with authority, not only as Moses might have delivered with authority a message from Jehovah, but because He and the Father are One, and that "as the Father knows Him, even so knows He the Father." And, in these days, we must not be afraid even of egotism. There is a great fear among Christian people. They have been so often assured that their teachers do not really believe the Creeds, that they are half inclined sorrowfully to admit it. To those who are confused and bewildered even the mere confession of our own faith may be reassuring. A man may still believe in Jesus Christ, may believe that He is "God manifest in the flesh," though he is by no means unfamiliar with the literature of modern scepticism. He may believe all the more confidently *because* he is *familiar* with that literature.

And if we do heartily believe what our Lord so continually, and in so many ways, affirmed of Himself, then *we can account for* the fulness, the penetrating power, the easy familiarity with the subject—if we may reverently so speak—of His revelation. Others speak of God as they have *heard*; each delivering his own precious but imperfect message, often scarcely himself perceiving its real significance. Christ speaks as One who was Himself "in the bosom of the Father," as One in whom the mysteries even of the Divine Nature were the mysteries of His own life. Others speak of man as they may be inspired to deal with some particular case, some pressing emergency; Christ speaks as One who "knew what was in man," because He Himself had made him. He could be the perfect "Light" because He was the "Life" of men. And the revelation in Christ has stood the test of innu-

merable verifications. Every fresh trial has confirmed it. From every believer has come the grateful, humble, fervent confession: "I have heard Him myself; I have proved, in my inmost heart and experience, that He *is* 'the Way and the Truth and the Life'; I have, in plain fact, '*come to the Father by Him.*'"

REVELATION IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

Let a man so account of us as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Here, moreover, it is required in stewards, that they be found faithful.—I CORINTHIANS IV. 1-2.

Every consideration which encourages us to hope, or even compels us to believe, that God will reveal to us His will for the guidance of our conduct, or will reveal to us otherwise undiscoverable truth for the satisfaction of our intellect, renders us in an equal degree impatient of delay, of the slow progress of those revelations which have actually been granted to us. We say to ourselves: "If revelation be necessary at all, why is it not given at once, in all its fulness; and why is it not given to everybody? Why should not all the Lord's people be prophets? Why should there be a 'chosen people'? Why should 'the fulness of the times' come only after countless millions of human beings have passed beyond the reach of those blessings which had been so long deferred? Either revelation must have been given at first, and then given fully, or our hope that it will be given at all can be nothing better than a dream."

But, first of all, how do we know that those who died before the Incarnation have passed beyond the reach of the blessings which the Incarnation, regarded even merely as a revelation, has brought to ourselves? Do we seriously believe that death is annihilation; or

that the departed, in some other world, are beyond the reach of the divine discipline, and instruction, and love? It was no sin to be ignorant of what it was impossible to know. The smallest insect may be perfect in its kind; and those who have put their trust in God, and tried to serve and please Him, though they had no knowledge or even vague anticipation of what has been fully revealed to us, may have been men "after God's own heart." And if they live at all after that event in their lives which we call dying, why should they not have continued to receive, and perhaps in more favourable circumstances, precisely the same revelations which, "in many parts and in many ways," have been granted to those who, in this earthly life, came after them? Indeed, what Christian man or woman who died *yesterday* had availed himself of all the knowledge, or attained to all the perfection, of which his privileges had rendered him capable? There are millions of Christians who can neither read nor write; millions whose worship is what we call superstitious; millions whose life on earth rendered them neither "fit for heaven" nor "fit for hell." Would it not be comforting to believe that the state of human beings after death may secure the instruction of the ignorant, the purification and strengthening of the frail and imperfect? And if they all "live in God," and are still in His holy keeping, why need we doubt that "what they knew not" when in this world "they shall know hereafter"; and that, in the higher school, God will "teach them" to more complete "profit"?

But, as to the slow progress of revelation, we must check and verify our speculations at every turn by observation and fact. The divine revelations *have been*

gradual and slow, whether we like it or not, whether we should have expected it or not. And I wish to remind you that you ought to have expected nothing else. To speculate upon what God might have done, or ought to have done, or must have done, is at once idle and irreverent; it assumes that we are wiser than God; it is a matter wholly beyond our depth. But to ascertain, so far as it is needful for us to know it, what God actually has done is quite within our reach. Moreover, the study of the works of God, and of the method of His working, is in the highest degree interesting and instructive. And the result at which we arrive, from whatever point we start, and whatever lines we traverse, is precisely this: that, measured by our standards of time, almost everything that God has done has been done slowly. He has chosen to act at first, within our earthly sphere, by His creative power, producing the materials and forces with which we are all familiar; but after that first creative act He has seen fit to proceed by long-continued evolution. This is affirmed at least symbolically, even if not with scientific accuracy, in the account of "the Creation" in the Book *Genesis*.

We know the earth as it is now. It is precisely *not* what the morbid Hamlet had come to consider it: "I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises; and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire—why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a

piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me; no, nor woman neither." The earth is rich with inexhaustible treasures. God seems to have lavished upon it, with a sort of divine prodigality, every kind of beauty and loveliness: the sublimity of mountains and ocean; the quiet loveliness of peaceful valleys and rippling streams; the song and plumage of birds; the bright colours, the delicate pencilling, the exquisite fragrance of flowers; the abundance of life in land and water, with man "the roof and crown of things," in the very "image of God." This is the world as we know it now. But is this the world as it came forth "from the hand of the Creator"? We need not ask Science: we may ask the Book *Genesis*; and we find that it was only by slow degrees—we know not, indeed, how slow—that this glorious world came to be what now it is. It was not, at first, so much as "a sterile promontory"; there was no "majestical roof fretted with golden fire"; likely enough what is now so solid was really "a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours." "The earth was waste and void: and darkness was upon the face of the deep." After we know not how vast an interval of time the awful darkness was penetrated by light. Then was constructed the "brave o'erhanging firmament"; land appeared, and the waters were "gathered together" into seas; sun, moon and stars shone forth on high, in their orderly movements measuring out "days and years" for a yet unpeopled earth; grass, and herbs,

and trees adorn what once was "waste"; in slow gradations come all "kinds" of living creatures; and only after a patient preparation, whose slowness baffles all the efforts of the most vivid imagination, "God created man in His own image." Nay, even the *body of man* was no sudden product of the divine power. "The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground." Previously existing elements were combined with infinite subtlety to form that marvellous habitation in which our spirits dwell. This is what the earliest Scriptures tell us, in their symbolical and mystic fashion, of the creation of the world.

And what we see in the creation of the world we see in every part of the divine procedure; in the progress to maturity of each individual, and in what we call the growth of civilization. Physiologists tell us that the newborn babe, even before its birth, has passed through almost every gradation of animal life; and has produced on an infinitesimal scale, and in the dark obscurity of its ante-natal existence, a minute copy of the evolution of the universe. And what can possibly be more utterly helpless than a newborn babe? A day old, nay, a year old, Caesar and Napoleon, Plato and Bacon, Shakspeare and Milton, were more absolutely dependent upon others, more incapable even of self-preservation, than the chick just hatched or the caterpillar just emerged from a butterfly's egg. And the moral difficulties of this slow progress of the individual to maturity are at least as serious as the moral difficulties of a slowly progressive revelation. If all the world outside Israel was left without the guidance of a special revelation; if the earliest Israelites had far less knowledge of God than the contemporaries of

Isaiah; and if the consequence of this was that they fell into idolatry, or superstition, or vice—we may marvel, indeed, that this should be consistent with the infinite love and righteousness of God, but it is in the strictest accord with the analogy of Nature and history and individual experience. The healthy physical development of a child depends almost absolutely upon the skill and care of parents or nurses; but equally dependent, often, upon the most ignorant and vicious is the child's intellectual and moral development. *Why* are many of our criminals, whom we see for the first time in the felon's dock or in the cell of a penitentiary, precisely what and where they are? There may be deeper reasons; the mystery of a human life is far too complicated for any of us to solve; but *one* reason is obvious and undeniable. They were brought up to be criminals; they graduated in the schools and universities of vice; their fathers were thieves, their mothers were unchaste; they were acquainted from their infancy with every kind of fraud and brutal violence; the most familiar and most constantly repeated words of the vocabulary which they were taught were oaths and curses. Why is a man a heathen, a "Jew, Turk, infidel or heretic"? why is he a Roman Catholic, or a Unitarian, or a "particular Baptist," or a Mormonite? In the immense majority of cases, because he was so brought up. Why do we, without hesitation, "promise and vow three things in the name" of our god-children? Because we know that, if we only take pains to produce it, we can as safely guarantee for them a belief of the Creed and a Christian mode of living, as we can guarantee for them a belief in the multiplication table and a civilized mode of living. And even

at the very best, with the most scrupulous care, with the wisest training, with the noblest examples, a child *must* pass through all the gradations of human experience. Only, if at all, through the innocence of ignorance; through the alarms, the bondage, the "curse" of the law; can he pass into "the glorious liberty" of a child of God. As in our physical development we have been, at one time or another, almost every kind of inferior animal before we became man, so in our spiritual development we pass through the religion of Nature, we are "baptized into Moses," we are enlightened by the prophets, before we can come into the perfection of Christ.

The progress of nations and of what we call "races"—though it is surely not irrelevant to ask *how many* human races there can possibly be—is even slower, and very much more apparently capricious, than the progress of individuals. The Hindoos, Greeks, Romans, Germans, belong to the same "race" of which we ourselves are members; we all speak what is fundamentally the same language. But nothing can be more irregular than the development of these various branches of the same stock. The characteristic of our Eastern kindred is a kind of apathy, an immovable adherence to custom and tradition, a dreamy mysticism. Their very heaven is scarcely distinguishable from annihilation. Their utmost blessedness is repose. The characteristic of Western civilization is what we call progress—a perpetual motion, an incurable restlessness, both of intellect and life. So terrible is this restlessness that our modern and Western "civilization" includes *the negation* of civilization; on the side of practical life, anarchists and nihilists; on the side of speculation, pessimists,

atheists, agnostics. We see again and again, both in Europe and in America, reversions to barbarism, and to the worst kind of barbarism—barbarism equipped with the armour of civilization. It is idle to wonder how this can be, consistently with our ideas of the love and righteousness of God. In plain fact *it is*; and if it be inconsistent with our ideas, we must amend our theories. But seeing that these things are so, we might surely have expected that the progress of revelation would be slow; and, at any rate, it is in exact accord with every part of the divine procedure with which we can possibly be acquainted. An instantaneous and perfect revelation would have been little less than a reversal of the divine method in every other department of God's operations.

But, on the side of man, it would have been impossible, unless the whole order of Nature had been actually reversed. Not even the Almighty, we may say with reverence, could teach the differential and integral calculus to a baby, without first performing a miracle upon the child, and giving him the strength and subtlety of an adult and well-trained intellect. "To be" *and* "not to be" is impossible even to thought. Mathematics, moreover, require only one particular set of faculties, and there have been many great mathematicians singularly deficient in historical, or poetic, or philosophical insight; whereas ethics and religion demand the utmost effort and culture of the whole man. Hence, man and the course of his development being what they are, revelation *must have been* gradual. And I have dwelt thus at length on this subject because I believe that the gradual progress of a divine revelation to mankind constitutes the chief difficulty which

renders it hard for many thoughtful people to believe that it has ever been granted.

I reminded you, in the sermons on the first two Sundays in Advent, that the revelation actually given to us was given through the lawgivers and prophets of Israel; was preserved in written records, and in social, political and ecclesiastical institutions; was perfected in the Incarnation of the Son of God. But the time came when it was possible, and even necessary, that divine truth should be allowed to escape from merely national and local restraints. Greece had conquered the world of thought. Rome had conquered the world of politics and action. One after another the nations of the earth had been subdued. Their religions had been either suppressed or sanctioned; but it was plain that the legions which had overcome their armies had also vanquished their gods. Out of all these once independent peoples there had come that mighty empire which the New Testament writers call "the whole world." It was now necessary that revelation also should be at once universal and yet protected by institutions which should be not only definite and rigid, but at the same time adapted to "all sorts and conditions of men." The "world" of Rome required a universal religion and a Catholic Church. Thus the original promise to Abraham was truly fulfilled: "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." God was revealed to us not only as the God of Israel, but as "our Father in heaven"—the Father not only of "publicans and sinners" among the Jews, but of schismatical and heretical Samaritans, of Roman centurions, of those "other sheep" who did not belong to the Jewish fold. That great Apostle to

whom especially were intrusted the "keys of the Kingdom of Heaven," was compelled, almost against his will, to open the door and admit the whole Gentile world to the blessings of faith and salvation. Even to S. Paul this was the very mystery of God, that there were no longer any barriers or "middle walls of partition" between Israel and the outside world. They were all one in Christ. "In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all." "I am debtor both to Greeks and Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you also that are in Rome." So, writing to the Colossians, he tells them of the great mystery that he had been commissioned to preach—namely, that Gentiles though they were, Christ was in *them* "the hope of glory"; "whom," he goes on to say, in answer at once to Jews and Gnostics—"whom we proclaim admonishing *every* man, and teaching *every* man in *all* wisdom, that we may present *every* man *perfect* in Christ Jesus."*

And as religion, with all its privileges, was now for all mankind, it was obvious that the Jewish regulations as to times and places of worship must be at once relaxed and finally superseded. Jerusalem might, indeed, though not without ever-increasing difficulty, be the one Holy Place for the inhabitants of Judaea and Galilee, but never for those whose home should

* See the notes on this passage by Bishop Lightfoot: *Colossians*, pp. 235-37. The immense difficulty of realizing the universality of the Gospel—that it was intended for *every* man, and the *whole* of it for every man—may be partially understood by those who have carefully studied the discussions about "work among the coloured people."

be at Rome, or in Spain, or in the far-distant Britain. Similarly those minute regulations—many of which have in lapse of time become almost wholly unintelligible—as to clean and unclean meats and animals and the like; regulations one of whose manifest objects was to keep the people of Israel separate from all others; became positively mischievous when every Christian man was to be, in his degree, the missionary of a universal religion to those whom Scribes and Pharisees would have deemed it a pollution to approach. Thus our Lord teaches the Samaritan woman that the hour was coming when no place could be honoured as “*the place*” where men were bound to worship God; and we sometimes fail to notice that the bare fact that He taught *anything* to a woman of Samaria, much more that His teaching to her was far fuller than the truth He had yet declared even to His chosen disciples, was a marvellous anticipation of the universal religion. “The woman saith unto Him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know: for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messiah cometh (which is called Christ): when He is come, He will declare

unto us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *He*." (*John* iv. 19-26.)

Similarly our Lord anticipates in His own emphatic teaching the later revelation to S. Peter, that God hath cleansed all things: "And He called to Him the multitude again, and said unto them, Hear Me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing from without the man that going into him can defile him: but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man. And when He was entered into the house from the multitude His disciples asked of Him the parable. And He saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Perceive ye not that whatsoever from without goeth into the man *it* cannot defile him, because it goeth not into his heart, but into his belly, and goeth out into the draught? *This he said*, making all meats clean.* And he said, That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within and defile the man." (*Mark* vii. 14-23.)

* This rendering, of course, assumes the reading *καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα*, for which the MS authority is overwhelming. See Tischendorf on this verse, *Editio Octava Critica Major*. But, even accepting the masculine participle, some, like Alford, still refer the "cleansing" not to Christ or to His teaching, but to the process of digestion. Alford says that the process here described is physically true: the impure part of the food is cast out, the pure assimilated. This explanation makes "unclean food" mean simply, "indigestible food." But our Lord is contrasting what "goeth into the belly" with "*what goeth into the heart*." The rendering of the Revised Version seems required by every principle both of text, grammar and exegesis.

This indifference of what is merely outward was enforced upon S. Peter in a revelation which remarkably illustrates the promise of Christ: "The Spirit shall guide you into all the truth, for He shall *take of Mine* and shew it unto you." And S. Paul insists upon the same truth even in what must have seemed to many so very serious a case as that of "meats offered to idols." There was no spiritual harm in such meat itself; nor in the fact that it had been offered to idols; nor in the fact that he who purchased and ate it knew or strongly suspected that it had been so offered. But if the meat were eaten with the desire to participate in heathen licentiousness, or as an acknowledgment of the reality or power or authority of the idol, *these desires or beliefs* would be what our Lord describes as "*going into the heart.*" Eating meat offered to idols with such intentions or beliefs would, indeed, defile—not from any lack of a perfect process of digestion, but because the eating would be accompanied by evil thoughts which no possible process of physical digestion could in the least degree remove.

When, then, "the fulness of the times" had come, and a Universal Religion had become possible, the protecting envelope of the old revelations was first stretched and then burst and destroyed. After the fall of Jerusalem it became physically impossible to obey the old law, as we find it in the Old Testament Scriptures, which were accepted as of divine authority in the time of our Lord's personal ministry. No one could offer sacrifice in the Temple when the Temple no longer existed; nor through the Aaronic priesthood when not a single descendant of Aaron could be certainly identified. If the new revelation in Christ were

not the fulfilment of the old, then the old religion was forever and fatally arrested, and the mission of Israel had conspicuously failed. But when we speak of the religion of Christ as universal, we do not, of course, mean that it was at once, by a miraculous illumination, made known to every human being; much less that it was accepted by all those to whom it was made known, and habitually used by all of them for the guidance of their lives. It was universal because it was adapted to all, needed by all, capable of redeeming and perfecting all. As a matter of plain history, nothing really valuable has yet been added to it; nor does it contain anything which the world could afford to lose. But it was itself a part of the progressive and slowly-moving operations of the Almighty. As among the people of Israel the protection of institutions, of a *cultus*, of rites and ceremonies, of appointed ministers and instructors, was necessary to prevent the corruption and dissipation of divine truth, so was a similar protection necessary for that new and perfect truth which was not to be made known to all mankind for many ages—which has not even yet been made known to more than a very small part of the whole human race. The new revelation had to be protected, like the old, partly by written records, which at a comparatively early period were produced, and which still remain for our learning and for the verification of all later teaching and “developments.” But, as in the case of the old, the written records were, for immediate practical use, and for the enormous majority of those to whom the Gospel was preached, not less intrinsically valuable, but immeasurably less available than “the ministers of Christ” and “the mysteries of God.” By living men

and by permanent and visible institutions, the Gospel of Christ was both propagated and preserved.

The Scriptures contained in the New Testament Canon are of such inestimable value that we can scarcely be surprised that they have sometimes been regarded with an affection that was almost irrationally jealous. They have done so much for us that many persons can with difficulty admit or even believe that they were not *the sole* agency both for the propagation and preservation of Christianity. They were also, in fact, far more available even for popular instruction than had been the earlier portions of the Sacred Books of the Hebrews; they were far more widely studied and more carefully expounded. They appeared in a literary age, and very speedily produced a literature of their own. Nevertheless, it is quite certain, as an historical fact, that they did not suffice, taken alone, either for the proclamation or protection of the new and perfect revelation which was given to us in the Incarnation of the Eternal Word. We often forget that when we speak of "a literary age" we are thinking not only of a particular period of time, but of a particular nation or cluster of nations, or even of much narrower classes of human beings, who lived during that particular period. We ourselves are living in a literary age; and so also are the natives of Tierra del Fuego, whom Mr. Darwin so graphically describes, and who came wandering about the *Beagle* in their pitiable filth and squalor. But we do not call these hideous and revolting cannibals *literary* simply because they are living in the nineteenth century. Nor should we call the negroes of the Southern States literary, nor Irish peasants, nor the ignorant multitudes which swarm in

the alleys and tenement-houses of our large cities. The Scriptures *as* Scriptures, that is to say as written documents which to be used must be read, are manifestly of no immediate service whatever to those who cannot read. Yet the truths of the Gospel have been made known, and the precepts of the Gospel have been applied for the guidance of life, to countless myriads of human beings who could neither read nor write, both by the personal ministry of the Apostles, and by their successors, and by Christian missionaries in every age and country, and by parish priests and their assistants in our own day and in the very cities in which we are living. Everybody knows, of course, that churches had been founded and organized in all directions before a single book of our New Testament had, in its present form, been committed to writing.

The Eternal Son of God, for the redemption of the world, left the bosom of the Father, "took upon Him our flesh and suffered death upon the Cross," was buried and rose again. His whole work had a direct relation to Almighty God, to the Divine Justice, to the majesty of God's law, and in its full meaning and mysterious necessity is far beyond the reach of the human faculties. But that work had also a direct relation to men; and, on that side, it could produce its effect only by being known and kept in remembrance and applied to the conduct of life. Enough is revealed to us of the relation of Christ's work to the Father to remove the horrible dread of our consciences, the haunting apprehension of hopeless alienation; to assure us that, if we lose ourselves in Christ and come to God in Him, we shall certainly be accepted. But that part of His work which has a direct effect

upon ourselves, which must be known in order to accomplish its purpose, is much more fully explained, because by its very nature it can come within our own experience, and is on the level of our intellectual and moral faculties. *Some* arrangement, then, had to be made for bringing this divine and blessed truth within the reach of all mankind; and we may surely reverently assume that what Christ really did provide for this purpose was certainly far wiser and better than what He omitted to provide. And nobody will contend that our Lord commanded His Apostles first of all to *write* a narrative of His life and teaching; and then doctrinal treatises setting forth the primary inferences from that narrative; and next to circulate these writings far and wide, and afterwards go about the world to explain them. *That*, most unquestionably, was *not* His commission. It was this: "Go ye into all the world and *preach* the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and *is baptized* shall be saved." And again: "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." He instituted *Sacraments*; "during forty days" He kept speaking to His Apostles concerning a "*Kingdom* of God."

And surely a *Kingdom* of God is something real, visible, organized; with officers and laws; and (being a *Kingdom of God*) with a ceremonial of worship. A kingdom in which everybody does what he likes is a contradiction in terms. A kingdom which has no ascertainable laws is a mere word to which no reality corresponds. And there were at least two *signs* of this Kingdom of God instituted by Christ Himself, viz. Baptism

and the Holy Communion. Suppose somebody, after hearing S. Paul preach, had believed his message and confessed himself a disciple, and then had gone on to deliver himself in some such fashion as this: "Your teaching is profoundly spiritual, and I approve it; you state facts for which you furnish evidence that satisfies me; I really wish to be identified with your work, and will help you as far as I can. But I can't go exactly so far as you do in what seem to me mere forms and ceremonies. I would rather not be baptized. I cannot see that any real good can come from the use, even the religious and symbolic use, of mere water. I am already a disciple by faith. And I don't care to be mixed up with your Church. Some of the members are very vulgar, some are not even good men. And you certainly yourself speak of the 'Communion of the Body of Christ' in a way that seems to me very likely to mislead thoughtless people. You must be aware that they may get the impression from your way of putting it that your simple little friendly supper has a kind of mystery about it; that it corresponds somehow to a sacrifice in which the offerers and participants have communion with their Deity; that the bread and wine have some kind of real and spiritual efficacy. I wish to be one of Christ's disciples, and I will be; but religion is of the heart, and so I will serve God in my own way, quietly and alone, and I doubt not He will receive and bless me. It is not the form I care for, but the substance." Now, if anybody had addressed S. Paul in this fashion, can we have the slightest atom of doubt how he would have been received? People (if there could possibly have been such in those days) who, when they believed, refused

to be baptized; who took just as much and just as little as they liked of the Apostles' "doctrine"; who respectfully begged to be excused from the Apostles' "fellowship"; who regarded "the breaking of bread" as tending dangerously to superstition; who said their "prayers" by themselves at their own homes—such people were most certainly not the material out of which the primitive Church was constructed. To attempt to construct any Church of such material, would be as wise as to attempt to build a cathedral by letting oxygen gas escape into the open air.

We do not vividly realize this because we are, in these last days, so familiar with the exercise of self-will and independence in matters of religion; with the great multitude and ever new creation of sects. We do faintly realize it sometimes in missionary work, both at home and abroad. And in fact the divisions of Christendom, though exceedingly injurious and always highly dangerous, are not as yet utterly fatal, because the Church, though with diminished power, does still exist and bear her testimony to the world. But is it worth while to ask—even if by the mutual repulsion of gaseous atoms a Church could have been brought into existence—is it worth while to ask how, without a solid organization, an august hierarchy, a fixed creed, a solemn liturgy, the perpetual *object-lessons* (to say nothing of the divine grace) of Sacraments, the Church of Christ could have been preserved in the dissolution of the Roman Empire and the creation of modern nations? It may be irreverent to speculate upon what God could or could not have done for the protection of Christianity; what He actually did was to defend it by the organization and ecclesi-

astical institutions of the Church, by the political genius of the Roman people, and by the supremacy of the Roman See. It is hard, indeed, to find unmixed good in this world, either in Church or State. The strong power which saves may become a destructive despotism. But however thankful we may be for the Protestant Reformation, and however satisfied with its results, we cannot reverse the facts of history; and it is an indisputable fact of history that Christendom was saved by the See of Rome.

The perfect revelation of divine truth in the Incarnate Word has, like all earlier revelations, to make its way slowly into the hearts and conduct of men. It must be woven into their lives; it must determine their habits; it must present itself even to their senses; it must be so summarized that it can be learned by heart; it must, as a "perfect law of liberty," be embodied in precepts; it must meet men at every turning of their lives, giving them feasts and fasts; it must have its appointed ministers, and solemn and, it may be, even gorgeous rites. Men are what they are, not what we should like them to be. They do not, all the world over, read books, carry on elaborate trains of argument, steer clear of the Scylla of irreverence and the Charybdis of superstition. They have not only their individual, but their national temperament. There are tens of thousands of simple people to whom a roadside crucifix would teach more theology than all the works of S. Augustine or Hooker. The altar and the Eucharist have done more to keep alive the belief in a real propitiatory Sacrifice on the Cross on Calvary, and a perpetual intercession on our behalf in heaven, than all the sermons that have ever been preached. That

we need a higher life than we derive from our earthly parents, that God will give us this life, that He loves and cares for every one of us, and that His love is the cause and not the effect of ours, has been taught more effectually by the Sacrament of Baptism than by whole libraries of systematic divinity. And whenever religion, even the Christian religion, has been deprived of the shelter of institutions, a *cultus*, a hierarchy, creeds, Sacraments, ritual, it has been more or less dissipated. As a matter of plain fact, those who minimize Christian doctrine are more afraid of what they call "externals" than of all the arguments in the world.

Therefore, at once for the propagation, the preservation, the application to all varying human conditions, of the revelation of the Son of God, we have an organized Church, a Kingdom of Heaven; "ministers of Christ," "stewards of God's mysteries," writing, ruling, teaching—bringing divine truth "home" to every child of man. The Church, because she is ever the same, can be ever variable; because she is "the pillar and ground of the truth," she can "be all things to all men."

REVELATION AS AN AUTHORITATIVE GUID- ANCE OF INDIVIDUAL LIFE.*

I am a stranger in the earth : hide not Thy commandments from me.—PSALM cxix. 19.

It may be well, in a few brief sentences, to recapitulate the substance of what I have been trying to say to you during the first three Sundays in Advent. I explained to you, as well as I was able, what I believe revelation to be. It is *not* the result of the ordinary processes of the human understanding in pursuit of truth. An industrious schoolboy, learning lesson after lesson, becomes at last a consummate mathematician or a classical scholar; but it would be an absurd abuse of language to affirm that his knowledge of mathematics or of Greek grammar and literature had come to him by revelation. Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Ethics*, Paley's *Moral Philosophy*, J. S. Mill's *Logic*, are highly valuable contributions to human knowledge in very different ways and very different degrees; but they are the result of patient inquiry, severe thought, knowledge of affairs, and the like. Revelation is a direct communication from God to the spirit of a man, of truth which, then and there, he could not otherwise have known; and of rules of life which, then and there, he could not otherwise have discovered. That God is able to make such a communication to men is involved in His very nature and infinite perfection.

* Preached on the fourth Sunday in Advent, 1885.

And when we remember that the highest even of the divine attributes is infinite love, we are compelled to admit not only the possibility of receiving, but the high reasonableness of expecting, such special revelations as may best promote that happiness and goodness which can only come to us by knowing and communing with God. And as a matter of fact these revelations *have been received* by chosen instruments of the Divine Will; and they have "been written for our learning" to the end of time. They have been stored up in outward institutions, in forms of common worship, in significant rites. Since the Incarnation of the Son of God, the perfect Prophet, the Very Truth, they have been preserved and protected and propagated by the same method; we find them in the simple and sublime narratives of the four Evangelists, in the Apostolic Epistles, in the Christian Church—with its Sacraments, its hierarchy, its liturgy and ritual, its common prayer and praise.

This morning we will consider revelation as the divine provision for the authoritative and unerring guidance of our individual lives. What it is, and where it is, are questions of the utmost possible importance, and in the order of logic they must be answered first of all. But when we have arrived at that answer we are instantly confronted, not with a theory, but with a paramount obligation. The revealed will of God, when we have discovered it, must be the central fact in the conduct of our lives. What He affirms we must unhesitatingly believe. What He commands we must unhesitatingly do. The truth may be mysterious, the demands may be exacting; but to faith and obedience there is no possible moral alter-

native. This is, of course, involved in everything that I have been saying, but it deserves and demands a separate and careful consideration.

The revelations granted to Israel through the prophets were intended for a nation; the revelation in Jesus Christ was for a Church and for the whole human race. And undoubtedly a nation, a Church, a race, is much more than the individuals of which it is composed. It would be possible, by skilful analysis, to reduce a human body to its simplest chemical elements; and the oxygen and hydrogen, the carbon and lime, and iron and phosphorus, and all the rest, might be set side by side in suitable vessels with both quantitative and qualitative exactness. But the contents of the row of jars or bottles would bear no resemblance to the living man from whose body they had been derived. The elements, the constituents, are there; what is lacking is an organism—combination, mutual dependence, a definite purpose, a perfect adaptation. But though all the parts are not necessarily a whole, a whole cannot possibly exist without the parts. “Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord,” was addressed to the whole people; it was at once the foundation of their religion and of their national life. But it was also addressed to each individual Israelite. Indeed, society, whether civil or ecclesiastical, is ordained of God for the very purpose, it would seem, of securing individual perfection—the perfection both of happiness and of goodness. It is a divine ordinance, not an artificial structure. We cannot choose whether or not we shall have parents; members of some *family* we *must* be. Nay, we must have been born within the territory and subject to the laws of some sovereign power. But society is not an

end in itself; nor is it possible even to conceive of a prosperous State in which every separate citizen should be miserable and degraded. On the other hand, a human being with hungry affections, with the faculty of speech, with unresting curiosity and an insatiable thirst for knowledge, can never attain the greatness either of joy or power of which his nature is capable, without communion with his kind. The revealed will of God, therefore, like the ordinary precepts of morality, assumes that domestic, social, civil, political life which, in truth, is not a work of art, but a law of nature.

Still, it is one of the most conspicuous characteristics of the supernatural revelation of which we have the record in the Sacred Scriptures, that it brings each one of us, separately, face to face with God. "Thou God seest me." "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" "And God called again: Samuel, Samuel; and Samuel answered, Here am I." "What doest thou here, Elijah?" "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" "So then every one of us must give account of himself to God." It is thus that the divine revelation meets us. We are members of a family; citizens of a State; scarcely distinguishable in a vast crowd: the din of the world drowns our voice, and renders the voices of those around us inarticulate. But there is *one* Voice never inarticulate, one Eye never dim-sighted, one Power which we can never elude. The two ultimate facts for us, as a divine revelation forces itself upon our recognition, are these—God and ourselves. In fact, such a revelation answers, or anticipates, the prayer. "I am a stranger in the earth: hide not Thy commandments from me."

What an unfathomable depth of meaning there is in

these few words! They are not a definition of dogma, they are a prayer. But (to take one side only of what they contain) they set before us the whole necessity, reasonableness, conditions, "philosophy," of *revelation*. "I am a stranger." Here we come to "the abysmal deeps of personality," and to that unfathomable mystery of a human spirit at once created and creative, dependent and free, a part of Nature and having dominion over it. "A stranger *in the earth*." Here is the arena of human conflict, the sphere of human duty, the tools and the materials of human work. "Hide not *Thy* commandments from me." Here is the consciousness of God, the realization of His love, the deep conviction that we need His guidance, the unfaltering confidence that we shall not ask for it in vain. "Hide not *Thy* *commandments* from me." Here is the acknowledgment that what we need is not advice, but government; not a theory, but a law; not the satisfaction of our curiosity, but the guidance of our lives; not philosophy, but authority.

What a solemn pathos is in these words: "I am a stranger in the earth"! Alas! one poor, forlorn soul in so bewildering a labyrinth! One scarcely knows on which side the danger is the greatest—whether on the side of beauty or deformity, law or disorder. "Love not the world," the Kosmos, the orderly arrangement of the universe, its ravishing beauty, its majestic sublimity, its unchanging monotony, its endless variety. But how can we help loving it? Did not the Eternal Himself, as He looked down upon it fresh from His creating hands, say of it, "It is very good"? It is not, indeed, our home: we are conscious of a divine origin and a heavenly destiny. But it is the place of our sojourning, and so unutterably fair.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own ;
 Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
 And even with something of a mother's mind,
 And no unworthy aim,
 The homely nurse doth all she can
 To make her foster-child, her inmate Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
 And that imperial palace whence he came.*

“The world” not only hides God from us, but the concealing veil is so beautifully painted we cannot bring ourselves to believe that there is anything more beautiful behind. What can we need more than all this wealth of beauty and life? Every bodily sense is satisfied. Our intellectual curiosity is delighted by ever-new surprises. Microscope and telescope are forever revealing to us new worlds. There is a stable order among whose interspaces we move with a delicious and exhilarating freedom. The wonders are inexhaustible; our hearts are too full for utterance; it is a bliss to be alone. The fragrance of the flowers, the songs of birds, “the washing of the eternal seas,” the roar of the thunder, the howling of the storm; the all but infinite variations, combinations, modulations, contrasts in the music of life—can there be anything better and more satisfying?

But soon we become weary of *the loneliness* of our rapture. There is something within us that refuses to be solitary; and as we wander through the world we find that we are not alone. The world is crowded with human inhabitants; we meet them, converse with them, love them, hate them; are helped or thwarted by them. We find that we can mould their lives, and they ours. Winged words pass to and fro from each to

* Wordsworth.

the other. New thoughts and desires arise in our hearts. We are fired with a noble ambition; we are drugged into a degrading lethargy; we are stimulated to a heroism of virtue; we are allured into the deceitful pleasures of sin and shame. Yet amid the multitude of our fellows we are "strangers" still. We thoroughly know but the mere surface of each other's lives. And then we separate, never, perhaps, to meet again. In some quiet hour we recall our past years, and out of the mists of forgetfulness we see gazing wistfully upon us the faces of those with whom we were once familiar, but who are now far beyond our reach. Seas and oceans now divide us, or perhaps the dark, mysterious river of Death. We try to live over again in vivid memory "the days o' lang syne." What ghastly recollections haunt our souls! Ah yes! What face is that turned so wistfully towards us in the dim light? Whose are those yearning, mournful, beseeching eyes? They are the face and eyes of a friend of our eager, passionate, undisciplined youth. What merry days and nights we spent together! what laughter and song! what "wine and women"! what "pleasant vices"! Where is he now, and what has he come to be? Alas! it was through us that he is "lost to life and use and name and fame." And we can *never* undo the wrong. What can have possessed us to play so recklessly with anything so subtle, so complex, so exquisitely delicate as a human life? And we are forever clashing together, not knowing what we do. Fools that we are, we think ourselves wise enough to direct our own goings, and to determine with accuracy the resultant of the innumerable forces, moving in every direction, which every moment we must encounter.

“She remembers no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world.” But were we really to be left to our own guidance, the anguish that the child was born would be far more intolerable than any anguish of travail. Even the heathen poet could thank God for the darkness in which He veils the future.* If there were no divine Pilot, how fiendish would be the cruelty of setting this little life adrift upon the mighty ocean of time and chance, with its strong currents, its hidden rocks, its terrific storms, its scarcely less fatal calms! The mother, with an instinctive faith that all will be well, folds her baby to her bosom, nourishes him with her own life, forgets that he is a mere “stranger” in a labyrinthine world. But alas! what woes and perils await him! Who shall protect him from “the terror by night,” from “the arrow that flieth by day,” from “the pestilence that walketh in darkness,” from “the destruction that wasteth at noonday”? Who shall assure him that, passing safely through all the diseases of childhood, he shall have a “sound body” as the home and instrument of “a sound mind”? Chiefly, who shall assure him of a sound mind? How shall he be trained and educated? By his mother, so as to be saved temptation and rough contact with those who might lead him astray? Alas! a woman *cannot* train a *man*. She will mistake effeminacy for purity, innocence for virtue. No, he must go out into the world. At school he will meet rough, coarse boys who will soon initiate him into the mysteries of sin, and prepare him for graduation in the University of Vice. He may fare

* Prudens futuri temporis exitum

Caliginosa nocte premit deus.—Horace, *Od.* III. 29.

worse still at college. And when he gets fairly into "the world" and begins real "life" for himself, the dangers will thicken on every hand. Do we not read the newspapers every day? And what is their record of passing events? Murder, suicide, adultery, embezzlement, bribery, corruption, bankruptcy. True, these are crimes; they are held up to public execration. But they are made sensational; they are so skilfully recorded that they become a kind of comic literature. The keen edge of moral reprobation is blunted, and "fools make a mock of sin." This is the "world" into which "the child is born." Well may each of us say: "I am a *stranger* in the earth"!

But now, as I have reminded you already, there is given to each one of us a primary revelation of *God* in conscience. We are aware of a Presence from which we can never escape, of a Judge to whom we are accountable. Life, therefore, at first sight, is more terrible than ever. In this labyrinth of the world we may indeed—nay, it seems as if we must—lose our way, but we shall be punished if we do. We get entangled in a web of temptations, but we are none the less responsible. We follow "the devices and desires of our own hearts," but we cannot be satisfied with our own wilful abuse of freedom: we are consumed with remorse. God is within us: He seems also to be everywhere. *We know* Him, but all Nature and all events suggest Him, and remind us of His immanence and rule. Whence comes the order of the universe, its infinite adaptations, its clear purpose? Why is it that sin is fast bound to suffering? We are ourselves continually forming resolves and plans and executing them. Our own *will* makes us familiar with power.

Our own *conscience* justifies the severe punishments which are continually inflicted upon evil-doers. When we reflect upon our own mental operations, our own clear distinction of right from wrong, we cannot help believing that truth and righteousness are at the foundation of the order of the universe. And this conviction is strengthened by discovering that thoughts similar to our own are continually arising in the minds of other men. Not only have even the most degraded and uncivilized some confident belief in a supreme power to which they must needs submit, but in proportion to the culture and intellectual development and widened experience of men has this confidence been strengthened and purified. The primary revelation in conscience is verified at every turn by innumerable and ever-varying observations and experiments. In proportion as we rise towards the utmost dignity and power of which our nature is capable do we find God everywhere, immanent in the world which He created, and calling us to judgment for every one of our deeds and words and thoughts, for our neglects and omissions.

Here, then, are *we*, with all the mystery of a human personality; endowed with reason, will and conscience; in *a world* whose vastness and minuteness equally baffle us; surrounded by sentient creatures, on which we can inflict and from which we can suffer pain; continually coming into contact with human beings like ourselves, whose wills defy anticipation, whom we can bless or curse, and who in their turn can ennoble or brutalize ourselves. So ignorant are we, that our best intentions are no guarantee that we shall do the things that we would. What we meant for a caress is

a stunning blow; we intend to give pleasure, and we produce excruciating agony. It seems as if we can grow wise only on condition of endless experiments of folly; as if we can grow good only on condition of endless experiments of evil.

Alas! this even is not the worst. We find in ourselves a mystery of iniquity. "There is a law in our members warring against the law of our minds and bringing us into subjection." It is the noblest distinction of our *human* nature that, when we will, we can distinguish with unerring certainty good from evil, right from wrong. But we have an almost infinite power of self-deception. Our "heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." We "call evil good and good evil; put darkness for light and light for darkness; bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." We cannot explain it, but there seems to be something in us tainted, corrupt, fallen, all but utterly and hopelessly ruined; and our own consciousness and experience are repeated in every human being we meet. We seem cursed with a horrible affinity for what we loathe and despise; we are irresistibly attracted by what is inwardly repulsive. We seem to shelter in our own mysterious nature every brute lust and passion: the subtlety of the serpent, the ferocity of the tiger, the sensuality which in the lower animals is a harmless and necessary instinct, but which in us is the most comprehensive of all degradations. We seem more foolish than the beasts that perish, for they know what they want and they pursue it, and we do not. We lavish the all but divine wealth of our affections upon worthless objects; with the utmost eagerness we pursue shadows; with incredible recklessness we fling

away the permanent blessedness of life. Truly "we are strangers in the earth," and we ourselves are stranger than the inexplicable world.

Nevertheless, in spite of the discords of our own nature and the intricacies of the world, become what we may, go where we will, we carry God within us, we find Him everywhere around us: making Himself known to us in the primary, irresistible, ineradicable revelation of *conscience*, verifying that primary revelation by the multitudinous experiences of life. We may "climb up" into the "heaven" of mystic communion, of high and noble resolves; we may "go down" into the "hell" of corruption and folly and vice. But "if we climb up into heaven He is there; if we go down to hell He is there also." Flying on "the wings of the morning," we cannot get beyond Him; in the densest darkness of our doubt, or even our despair, He abides unchanged and unchangeable. *We* may be "strangers," but *He* is everywhere at home; and being at home, utterly knowing us and knowing the world, if He will He most assuredly is able to guide us. And so there has ever ascended to the Eternal the cry, articulate or even inarticulate, with much or little comprehension of its full meaning, the bleating of the lost sheep for the Shepherd, the cry of the lost child for his Father:—" *We are strangers in the earth: hide not Thy commandments from us.*"

But let us carefully consider what this prayer means. What is that perplexity which wrings it from our hearts? Is it simply that we cannot *understand* the world—in the sense in which a chemist may be baffled in the analysis of a very complex substance of exceedingly unstable equilibrium? Do we want a science of

Nature, an accurate psychology, a well-arranged catalogue of successive phenomena? Is it, in a word, any form of *knowledge* which would satisfy us? On the other hand, ignorance has its delights. It is the source of curiosity and wonder. The hunt seems often more satisfying than the game. If we were only contemplative and intellectual beings, complete knowledge would be a kind of Nirvana, at once perfection and annihilation. Even as it is, the wealth of our knowledge sometimes embarrasses us: if we knew less we could do more. Much oftener our knowledge is the direct source of our misery and confusion: if we had known less we should have been less guilty. No doubt we want a map and chart of life; but maps and charts are not merely pretty drawings, and nobody would ever construct them as mere works of art. They are for the traveller and the seaman, not for the connoisseur. They are for use, not merely for admiration. They are for people who desire, by the safest and nearest way, to reach a definite goal; not for people rambling about the world in search of beauty, and careless where they land and how long they stay, if only they may gratify their aesthetic instincts. What we want, when in our deepest need we cry to God—that deepest need which always compels us to be sincere—is not information, but law; not theories, but commandments.

But here again we are confronted with the contradictions of our nature. The abundance of our revelations bewilders us; we forget why we desired them. Having received the answer to our questions, we cannot realize that all further questioning must be superseded. We wanted a guide; but when He comes to us we begin to require Him to satisfy *us* that He knows the way

which our desperate ignorance compelled us to ask from Him. We will be both learners and teachers, feeble and omnipotent, "strangers" and at home. Freedom, we say, is our birthright; moreover, it is at the very core of our religion, which must be a "reasonable service," a "law of liberty." We must be won, not driven; we must surrender our hearts and not our behaviour.

And, indeed, liberty *is* a necessary condition of all religion and morals.

Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours to make them Thine.

But liberty is not an end in itself, nor does it teach us its own uses or limits. Nevertheless, those uses and limits it is by no means difficult to discover. "Give me the liberty," says John Milton, "to know, to utter and to argue freely above all liberties." "To know"—that is, to arrive at some positive and ultimate truth. "To utter"—that is, to impart what we have ascertained to be true to other people. "To argue"—that is, to clear our minds from the errors of first impressions. But when we really have come to know some particular truth, we have, so far as that particular truth is concerned, exhausted the uses of our liberty. There is nothing more, in that direction, to be done. Liberty to know is not the same thing as liberty to forget, or liberty to deny, or liberty to corrupt. After knowledge come feeling, purpose, resolve, action; but a truth once accurately known is itself unalterable. Further inquiry is superfluous; and restless curiosity and corrosive criticism will only deprive us of the benefits of the knowledge of that truth which we have with difficulty discovered

or which may have been supernaturally imparted to us. In the sense that nobody can prevent us, we are free to deny the multiplication table, or that the three angles of a triangle are together equal to two right angles ; but he who should so use his liberty would be regarded not as a splendid and daring genius, but as a hopeless lunatic. And surely it would be equally foolish and irrational to obtain from God Himself minute directions for the guidance of our lives, and forthwith to begin to criticise them and to correct them, and to set them aside.

Of course it will be rightly objected that the law of God which He has been pleased to reveal to us, and the revelation of which has been preserved for us in the Sacred Scriptures and in the various institutions of the Church, is by no means so simple as the deductions of geometry or algebra. When these are clearly understood by a sane mind, it is simply impossible even to doubt them. Especially the terms employed are strictly defined, and are always used in the same sense. If we would understand the relative complexity of mathematical and ethical science, we may compare the definitions of a circle, a triangle, a square, with the definitions of a man, virtue, wisdom, duty. Moreover, a continuous series of revelations, of which the later not only imply but partially supersede the earlier, can be understood only after patient and reverent investigation, and will offer problems for our solution of the utmost complexity and delicacy. The restless curiosity of the human intellect, closely connected as it is with the exacting demands of the human conscience, is a most precious gift of God without which we might easily mistake a small part for the

whole, and rest contented at once with imperfect knowledge and rudimentary or fragmentary virtue. The whole domain of truth is so vast that we should never have strength or courage even to attempt its conquest but for that insatiable longing, that eager, passionate desire which God has made a part of our nature. In addition to all that we have discovered, in addition to all that God has revealed, there are still boundless realms of truth from whose nearest frontiers we are separated by an almost illimitable distance. After every new attainment, after every largest victory, there is still the divine promise: The Holy Spirit of God "shall shew you *things to come*."

Nevertheless, though progress be, in its very nature, a perpetual motion onwards, it also involves—in spite of the verbal paradox—innumerable intervals of rest. The swiftest runner must, at least for an instant, plant his foot firmly on some particular spot. Every lever must have its fulcrum, and though our ambition may be to "move the world," we must have a "where to stand." We shall never secure the whole if we allow each part to escape us as soon as we have made it our own. The whole series of divine revelations, in their variety and their unity, will afford ample scope for incessant inquiry; but each truth, as soon as we have ascertained it, must be put to practical use, not to a new analysis. It is this that we so habitually forget. We are "strangers in the earth," and we cry for guidance, for authority, for "commandments." But when we have received them we treat them not as solutions of our difficulty, but as new problems. We regard them not as a clue to the labyrinth of life, but as new windings.

When, therefore, I remind you that a revelation is final, that it leaves us no room for speculation or correction, but must be followed at once by exact obedience, I by no means imply that you have exhaustively studied and perfectly understood the whole series of divine revelations. I am very far from asserting that they will not even introduce you to new mysteries, which will be at once the objects of your faith and the satisfaction and provocation of your intellects. But I would urge upon your consideration that as, piece by piece, you do comprehend or apprehend the meaning of these revelations, they must, for all practical purposes, be final and conclusive. If you ask Almighty God to teach you, you must be willing to learn: when He tells you what to do, there is no possible moral alternative but forthwith to do it.

What, for instance, do we mean by *religion*? On the theoretical or dogmatic side it consists of certain truths and facts; on the practical side it consists of certain precepts, principles, laws, which are intended for the guidance of our lives in our relations to God; and in our relations to each other so far as those relations arise out of, or are dependent upon, our relations to God. And by the Christian religion we mean those truths which are revealed to us in Christ, and those practical directions which are contained or implied in what Christ has said and done, and in what He Himself is. In the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament we have four narratives of the life of our Blessed Lord on earth, with the record of very much of His teaching: from the comparative simplicity of the Sermon on the Mount to the profound mysteries of His last discourses immediately before the Passion.

The Four Gospels are the very central and essential part of the New Testament; their truth is implied in every Epistle, and in those Apostolic labours a part of which are reported in the *Acts of the Apostles*. If we reject the Four Gospels, we have rejected the Christian religion altogether. "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." And the Four Gospels, notwithstanding their natural and highly instructive variations, are perfectly harmonious. In each of them are set forth the perfect humanity and the divine glory of our Saviour Christ. They all record miracles as well as discourses. There is no reason for rejecting one of them which would not be conclusive for rejecting them all; there is no reason for rejecting any part of one which would not be equally conclusive for rejecting the whole of that one. There are in the existing manuscripts of the Four Gospels thousands of "various readings," the enormous majority of which are doctrinally insignificant; but what might be called the *minimum* text leaves the narrative of our Lord's life and teaching substantially unaltered. If, then, we accept these Gospels as historically veracious, we must regard our Blessed Lord as the Eternal Son of God, "made flesh" for the world's redemption, the absolute Master and infallible Teacher of every human spirit. From His judgment there is no possibility of appeal. His teaching is the perfect answer to the prayer, wrung from us by the hard necessities of our lives, "We are strangers in the earth: hide not Thy commandments from us." I want you carefully to consider, then, that it is not only profane but irrational to subject our Lord's teaching to further criticism. The *Sacred Books of the East* we

may criticise; they are confessedly—at the very best, and in their very best parts—the records of the speculations, the needs, the longings of a remote antiquity; of men of exceptional intellectual power, of great reformers, or philanthropists, or theosophists, or mystics. But they have no *authority*. To accept them as a divine rule of life would be utterly absurd—far too absurd for our eclectic theologians. But, when we come to the Four Gospels, Christ is everything or nothing; the Son of God or a bad man; the worker of miracles or an impostor; above our highest homage or beneath our contempt. When we recognize Him as our Teacher and Lord, He declares to us mysteries far beyond our comprehension: He gives us laws and principles so exacting that not a thought, a word, a deed, can possibly escape them. But He leaves us no moral alternative but to believe and obey Him. To accept His Sermon on the Mount and reject His last discourses; to accept the parables and reject the miracles; to accept Him as “the perfect blossoming of humanity” and reject Him as “God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God”—this is not a true development of Christian truth, it is mere stupidity. Apart from the fact that men are habitually illogical, it would be odious hypocrisy or detestable lying.

The New Testament, then—and especially the Four Gospels—contains the record of a revelation, or series of revelations, which is intended, not to amuse us, nor instruct us, nor furnish material for speculation and criticism, but to command us, to rule us, to guide our lives in every particular. What is left for us to do after receiving this revelation is, not to criticise and amend and interpolate and expurgate, but to under-

stand and apply. Only too large a part of our modern preaching is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the very idea of revelation. It implies that in a general way, by ordinary processes, God has allowed us to attain to truth; but that this "truth" may, after all, very likely be false, and that liberty to disbelieve it is as essential to our religion as readiness to obey it. Surely a revelation of this kind would be only a bitter irony, only a round-about and cruel way of "*hiding*" God's "*commandments from us.*"

The revelation of God in Christ—what has been revealed to us of the Person, and divine glory, and absolute Lordship of Christ—is the very centre of the Christian religion. Take this away and there is really *nothing* specifically Christian left to us. "The Christ," as a competitor with "the Buddha" for the reverence of mankind, may be good or bad, wise or foolish, but He is not the Christ of the New Testament. He is not in any sense the Christ of history. He is a modern mosaic; not a Creator, but a creature; not even the creature of any one Divine Hand, but the resultant of innumerable unreasoning forces—where, whence, when, whither, no human ingenuity can divine. An artificial compound, produced by the skill or hopefulness of modern theological chemistry, and of such excessively unstable equilibrium, can hardly be employed in building up a structure of permanent human life.

But if whole sects, and prominent individual teachers, "play fast and loose" with the Person of our Lord—regarding Him as human when they want to modify *His* teaching, and as "divine" when they need Him to guarantee *theirs*—we need not wonder that they are much more at ease in dealing with the Church which is

His body. *If* He be indeed the very Lord of men ; *if* He founded a Church on certain principles, with a definite organization, with a Creed, and ministers, and mysteries, then His Church has for her special needs His own power. Her laws are His laws. She administers a divine *authority*, and, even in matters "indifferent" in themselves, must overrule individual caprice or idleness. And this is what nearly all of us habitually forget. It is not necessary, here and now, to enter upon any elaborate argument to prove that the Church of which we are members is a part of the true Church of Christ. This we have already proved or at least assumed. Even if we are mistaken, *obedience* is the safest road to a better knowledge. If we be thoroughly sincere we may still be in error ; we may be "otherwise minded" than fuller light would justify. But what we do not yet know "God will reveal unto us," if only "we walk by the same rule" of devout submission which has led us thus far towards the goal. But what possible sense or reasonableness can there be in connecting ourselves with the Christian Church and then acting as if we were wholly independent? There might be a grim and awful consistency in rejecting Christianity altogether ; or in determining to be altogether outside the Church. But if once we enter the Church we have no moral alternative but to take part in her worship, to receive her sacraments, to submit to her hierarchy, to carry out to the utmost her intentions. It is no longer for us an open question whether or not we shall keep Feasts and Fasts ; whether we shall "go to Church" on Sundays, and whenever else our honest business will allow. To *minimize* our Church duties is not indeed so dangerous, but is perhaps even more

irrational, because more inconsistent, than wholly to repudiate them. The provision which the Church has made, by the authority of Christ and under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, for our spiritual necessities, is *a whole*: of which the parts are in accurate and beautiful proportion. We are bound, therefore, without further option or alternative, not only to join in the common prayer and praise, but also "to hear sermons"; not only to hear sermons, but to partake, as often as we may be able, of the "Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ." We are not only to "mortify," during Lent, all our "evil and corrupt affections," but to rejoice at Easter with that exceeding joy with which "the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord." We are not only on Sundays to accompany our Lord Himself through the scenes of His earthly ministry, but to thank Him on Saints' Days for the inestimable benefits which He has graciously bestowed upon us in His holy Apostles and martyred Saints, and in the mysterious and blessed ministrations of His holy Angels.

Let us, then, remember, my dear brethren, that, wellnigh overwhelmed by the dangers and uncertainties of life, we cried to God, not for mere information and advice, but for law and authority. He has mercifully answered our prayer. Through the lawgivers and prophets of Israel, in the Incarnate Word, in the visible Church, He has given us "*commandments*." Let us see to it that promptly, always, and unfalteringly we *perfectly obey them*.

THE BIBLE AND THE GOSPEL.

I thank God that I baptized none of you, save Crispus and Gaius: lest any man should say that ye were baptized into my name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel: not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void.—I CORINTHIANS i. 14-17.

The words which I have just read to you—as you cannot have failed to perceive—possess a double interest, a twofold value. They express, in the most emphatic terms, both positively and negatively, what S. Paul believed his work as an Apostle to be. It *was* “to preach the Gospel,” and it *was not* “to baptize.” But, in addition to this, they throw a very bright light upon the nature of the Holy Scriptures: they reveal to us the mode in which the epistles were written; they help us to understand that intellectual and spiritual power or aptitude, whether natural or supernatural, to which we commonly give the name of “inspiration.”

It is of course conceivable that S. Paul's letter to the Corinthians—which we may here regard as a type or specimen of all “Scripture given by inspiration of God”—might have been written at the literal dictation of the Almighty; just as the Apostle himself dictated his letters to Tertius or some other amanuensis. In that case every sentence and word in the letter would have been literally “the word of God.” *He* would have been directly responsible for the slip of memory

as to the number of Corinthians whom S. Paul had baptized, and for the assertion that certain counsels were *not* from "the Lord." Every departure from ordinary syntax or orthography would have been, if not an error—which the hypothesis would exclude—then a divine revelation of the true rules of grammar or of the structure of language. What seem now to be the expressions of S. Paul's own feelings of anxiety or alarm or affection, must have received a non-natural interpretation, as affirming not what S. Paul said he felt, but what God knew that he might have said that he felt. Indeed, the epistle would have been, as to many of its most characteristic passages, a divine work of fiction or of dramatic skill, like the book *Wisdom*, which is attributed to Solomon, or the various speeches in Thucydides or Livy. For, obviously, for the merely manual writing of any book whatever, no "inspiration" of the *amanuensis* would be necessary—nothing but a knowledge of the art of writing. He might be a good man or a bad, believing what he wrote or disbelieving it. His own feelings and character would be entirely irrelevant, and what he wrote from dictation would bear no trace of his literary style. For the direct imitation of the *style* of the *amanuensis* by the divine Author would have been so certain to deceive, while wholly unnecessary for the purpose of conveying the divine revelation, that we may safely regard it as an impossible hypothesis. Nay, if it were possible for the Almighty to dispense with the intellect, the character, the experience of His amanuensis, it would have been equally possible to dispense with his fingers. It would have been as easy to produce parchment by direct miracle, as to produce the skin of an animal; and

intelligible marks, such as the letters of an alphabet arranged in the words of a known language, as the forms and colours of the petals of flowers and the wings of birds. But all such speculation is at once idle and unnecessary. God might have produced a Bible in either of the modes suggested above, but certainly it would not have been such a Bible as we actually possess. Moreover, in this *First Epistle to the Corinthians* we have not only a very important part of the Sacred Scripture, but we can see it *in the making*. Here is S. Paul actually writing it, and in such a manner that we are able to understand not only the outside, but even the inside, of the process of its construction.

The Apostle has received a letter from the Corinthian Church, just as a modern rector on a visit to Europe might receive a letter from the parishioners he had left behind; also, he had received a good deal of news about them, of a very mixed character, from certain persons to whom he refers as "them which are of the household of Chloe." So he sets himself to answer their letter, and also to give them counsel and warning arising out of the information he had received about them from the Chloe people. He does not write a treatise *On the Unity of the Church*, or *On the Dress of Women*, or *On the Peril of Idolatry*, or *On Marriage*, or *On the Holy Eucharist*. We have well-known treatises on all these subjects, in the writings of the Fathers and the *Books of Homilies*, and elsewhere. But nothing can be more unlike such treatises than S. Paul's *Letter to the Corinthians*. It is a real letter, to real people, answering a real letter, dealing with real circumstances, expressing real feelings.

And it is *full of S. Paul*. His very style is as un-

mistakable as the style of Shakespeare, or Macaulay, or Carlyle. But here we have the whole man—his moral earnestness, his almost womanly tenderness, his grasp of great principles, his skill and tact in their application to the minutest details of conduct, his lofty independence, his yearning for sympathy and love, his childlike simplicity and humility. Indeed, this letter is *itself the source* of by far the largest part of all that we know of the Apostle's character. If he did not write this epistle, we cannot be sure that he wrote anything at all, we cannot know for certain what manner of man he was. And, manifestly, whatever his "inspiration" may have been, it is perfectly certain that it in no degree superseded or overpowered his own individuality.

Now, how does S. Paul set about his task of writing this letter? Does he first of all claim to be inspired, scrupulously avoid even the bare appearance of oversight or mistake, or "second thoughts"? Does he repress all that is personal, so that the Holy Ghost alone may be heard? On the very face of the epistle, it is plain that he does nothing of the kind. He goes right on, as we all do when we are in earnest, when we are writing to friends whom we love on subjects in which we are profoundly interested. If he makes a mistake he does not carefully erase it, he does not even completely correct it; for what does it matter to the great purpose he has in his mind? "I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius." "Yes, I did"—"I baptized also the household of Stephanas; besides I know not"—"it may have been so, but I don't remember"—"that I baptized any other." For, indeed, they were at most so few out of all the Corinthian con-

verts that nobody could possibly, on the ground that he had baptized them, accuse S. Paul of founding a party, or "baptizing into his own name." So far, again, is S. Paul from confining what he has to say to subjects of such absolute moral certainty that he can be confident that he is uttering the very truth and law of God—so far is he from this, that he goes out of his way to remind the Corinthians that he is giving them, in some cases, not commands, but counsels, not the law of God, but his own opinion. "To the married I give charge, yea, not I, but the Lord, that the wife depart not from her husband . . . and that the husband leave not his wife." That is a broad, unmistakable moral principle. It is the divine rule; it is involved in the very nature of marriage; it is laid down in the express words of Christ Himself. But might there be *no* exceptions? Is there *nothing* so inwardly contradictory of the marriage-union as virtually to annul it, and leave husband or wife free to leave the other? Was not so serious a difference as that between a believer and an unbeliever a sufficient excuse for separation? As to this S. Paul would only give his own opinion: "To the rest say I, *not the Lord.*" And later on, speaking of the second marriage of a widow, he says: "She is happier if she abide as she is, after my judgment; and I think that I have also the spirit of God."

But if this be so, if this letter be so full of S. Paul, so natural, so devoid of all claim in *every* particular to infallibility, wherein consists S. Paul's inspiration? So far as inspiration is miraculous and unique, it is, of course, incapable of definition. For, so far, by the very nature of the case, there is nothing in ordinary

experience with which it can be compared. It can at the most be defined only by enumerating its effects: as the gift or faculty by which he who possesses it is enabled to write such and such books, to deliver such and such messages. If then *the First Epistle to the Corinthians* be a product of inspiration—as most unquestionably it is—inspiration is not incompatible with a slip and imperfection of memory, with some uncertainty about the mind of the Spirit, and with the freest play of individual character. Thus we are really only concerned to know what inspiration can do, and not at all what its precise nature is; nor even whether it is a supernatural gift—though we may well believe that it is—or equivalent in many respects to what we call genius. *Anybody* who could produce a letter like S. Paul's to the Corinthians is, *ex vi termini*, inspired; for the only meaning of the word inspiration is, *a faculty, or exaltation of faculties, natural or acquired or supernaturally bestowed, by which its possessor is enabled to produce effects of a certain kind.* And this, we may remark, is the only way in which we can define any ultimate fact. What do we mean by *genius*? To answer this question we must ascertain and carefully examine what men have agreed to consider works of genius. We must notice what qualities they have in common; and what qualities we find, when we compare them with other works, that they possess exclusively. And when we have, with sufficient care, completed this investigation, we shall still be unable to define what genius is in itself. But we shall have arrived at a practically sufficient definition or description of it, as *a quality or combination of qualities by which he who possesses it is enabled to produce work of*

a particular kind ; such, for instance, as a drama like *Hamlet*, or a musical composition like Beethoven's *Choral Symphony*. We should determine the *genius* of the man by examining his work ; not the merit of the work by *assuming* the genius of the man.

Indeed this is the only way in which we can define either matter or spirit, either the external world or our own mind. The external world we believe to exist and to be external to ourselves, only by reason of an irresistible inference at once from the variations and the stability of our mental experiences. The external world is defined by its effects ; it is *that which produces certain sensations and the like* ; such as sight, hearing, the perception of hardness, heat, cold, pain, and so forth. Of what it is in itself we have no knowledge whatever, excepting that it is : and if it could be annihilated, and the same *effects* be produced upon our mental experiences by incessant miracles, it would not be necessary to change a single word in our vocabulary or a single principle or detail of the natural sciences. The whole of natural science may be described as *a methodical statement of mental phenomena in terms of matter*. Similarly we have no knowledge whatever of the essential nature of mind, though we are far nearer to a knowledge of mind than to a knowledge of matter. For the operations of mind we know directly. They are modes of what we mean by *self* ; whereas that these modes of self are produced by something external is a mere inference, though an inference universal and irresistible. The only possible definition of mind is founded upon what it does : mind is *that which thinks, and feels, and wills*.

Remembering, then, these principles and limitations,

I shall not attempt to define inspiration otherwise than by its effects. Least of all shall I try to penetrate into the secrets of the supernatural, or to ascertain what the special experience of an inspired man was, in so far as it may have depended upon any miraculous operation of the Almighty. Nevertheless, even on this side, and if we assume—as, for my own part, I believe—that the cause of inspiration was some special influence exerted upon the spirit of a man by the Spirit of God Himself, we may get some little light upon the nature of inspiration—and, at any rate, it is the only light that we can get—by means of certain analogies of ordinary human experience. For we must remember that, whatever the power of the Almighty may be, the capacities of human nature are strictly limited. Whatever revelations He may think fit to make to a human being, or whatever operations He may think fit to perform upon the human mind, He can never possibly go beyond the receptive faculties of our nature itself. How, then, let us ask, do we influence one another? Clearly enough we can do this partly by means of our bodies. That is to say, we can employ physical force, literal coercion, for the purpose of inducing a man to do or to leave undone whatever we may wish or not wish. Thus, for instance, if we want to prevent him from going to a certain place, we can lock him up; or, on the contrary, if we are strong enough, we can force him into a railroad car or into a steamship, and carry him whithersoever we will. There is, however, nothing spiritual in all this, and, accordingly, we never give to it the name of inspiration. If it had been the will of God that a prophet, captive in Babylon, should know what was going on at the same time in desecrated

Jerusalem, He might have miraculously carried him thither, and so enabled him to see it with his own eyes. But if this had happened, and the prophet had written in consequence ever so accurate a description of what he saw, nobody would call him, for that reason, an inspired man.

But we are perfectly well aware that we can influence one another, and habitually do, by altogether different means. We can persuade one another by arguments addressed to the reason. A man comes to us, for instance, entirely convinced that a certain course of conduct is right, or wise, or likely to promote his happiness, and firmly resolved to adopt that course of conduct. He tells us of this fixed resolve, and explains to us its reasons. But we talk with him; we show him that he has been mistaken; that the course of conduct he proposes would not be wise, or right, or to his own interest; we win him over to our way of thinking, and he goes away from us, after that interview, as firmly resolved to avoid that course of conduct as he had previously been to pursue it. Now, what have we really done to this man? We have really *put ourselves into him*; we have imparted to his mind those very results which actual experience had produced upon our own. We have not only induced him to alter his determination, but we have changed his belief, his opinions, his wishes; we have so influenced him that, of his own accord, he entirely abandons what was his fixed resolve. We have taken possession of him, and thenceforward, in that particular part of his conduct, there will be as much *of us* in him as *of himself*. We have put our spirit into him. Why, therefore, may we not say, in a word, and in the strictest meaning of the word, that we have *inspired* him?

Indeed, we can influence one another in this purely spiritual way to a far greater extent, and far more profoundly, than by producing any change in one another's opinions. Thus, for instance, we can induce people to love us; we can reproduce in them our own tastes and preferences; our own ways of looking at things; our own likings and aversions for persons. If a man with any real character, with any powers of receptivity and assimilation, will carefully examine, at any given time, his inner life, he will find it exceedingly difficult to determine how much, or I might better say how little, even of his most marked characteristics can be truly said to be his own. Apart from the general influence of other minds upon his, through education, or books, or conversation, or business and family relationships and the like, it is next to certain that he will be aware that there are some two or three persons who, for good or for evil, have in an almost incalculable degree moulded his character. Now, what is all this, in the ordinary course of human experience, but the subtle power which every human spirit has of penetrating into any other human spirit, and clinging to it, and living in it, and reproducing itself in it in innumerable and indefinable ways?

Now, we must remember that it is of the very essence of religion that there is a similar correspondence between the spirit of man and God. "There is a spirit in man," says the book *Job*—not, be it observed, in exceptional men, such as Moses or Isaiah or S. John, but in *man* simply as a human being—"and the Spirit of the Almighty giveth him understanding." Similarly we pray every Sunday in church that "God would cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspira-

tion of His Holy Spirit." And again, that He would "grant to us His humble servants that, by His holy inspiration, we may think those things that are good and by His merciful guiding may perform the same." What is this but the archetype of that power of spirit over spirit, which we find in ourselves, and which is a very large part of what we mean when we say that we are in the image of God? It would be strange indeed if God, who is a spirit, could influence the world and human beings only by methods which are not spiritual—by heat, or light, or electricity, or gravitation—but could bring Himself into no vital contact with our reason, or our affections, or our wills. But if He does come into this living fellowship with us, what better name can we possibly give to it than the very name inspiration, whether its effects be upon our intellects, or our feelings, or our conduct; whether it induces us to think good thoughts and lead pure lives; or to help a nation to the birth, like Moses; or organize and counsel Christian Churches, like S. Paul?

For it is surely obvious that the effects of this kind of influence of spirit upon spirit may differ, and, in fact, are certain to differ, according to our natural capacities and our circumstances, and the work that we have to do. Thus the artificers who were engaged on the Tabernacle are spoken of in the book *Exodus* as "wise-hearted men," in whom "the Lord put wisdom, and understanding, to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary." They were not less really inspired than Moses himself; it would perhaps be incorrect to say that they were more largely inspired; but in Moses God found, if we may so speak, larger material, a nobler instrument, capable of far

higher uses. Inspiration, therefore, did not turn Bezaleel and Aholiab into legislators, nor Moses into an artisan; but it tended to perfect each according to his own capacities, and for the work for which he was naturally fitted. I say that it *tended* to do this; for inspiration is not a mechanical force, exerted upon mere matter: it is a spiritual force, exerted upon free spirits, and therefore capable of being resisted. Thus "it came to pass, as soon as Moses came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount." Surely we are not intended to suppose that the hot anger and the passionate action of Moses was the direct effect of a divine inspiration.

And now let me return to S. Paul and his work as an Apostle, including not only oral instruction, but such written letters as still remain for our edification in the New Testament Canon. He was a man naturally great, and exceptionally responsive to divine influences; as he was, indeed, to all spiritual influences. He lived habitually in communion with God, opening his heart to all the gracious and illuminating operations of the Divine Spirit—a man truly inspired. What is the effect of his inspiration? by what signs do we note its reality and its power? He meets with a slave called Onesimus, who by him is "begotten in his bonds." The slave belongs to Philemon. Philemon is a dear friend of S. Paul's, and under such spiritual obligation to him that the Apostle might almost have demanded that he should be allowed to retain Onesimus, that "in his master's behalf he might minister to him in the bonds of the Gospel." But S. Paul will not avail

himself of this obligation. He returns Onesimus to his master. He recognizes at once the sacredness of existing laws, and the universal liberty that is in Christ. He appeals to the heart of Philemon, to his generosity, to his Christian spirit; and, indeed, this, with expressions of personal regard and friendly salutations, is the whole substance of S. Paul's epistle to him. Here, then, are what we may call the ordinary effects of inspiration, of an inspiration which we all receive. S. Paul "by God's holy inspiration thinks those things that are good, and by God's merciful guiding performs the same." There is in the *Epistle to Philemon* no revelation of occult mysteries, not a word about Justification by Faith, or the Sacraments, or Church Polity. It is just such a letter as any really godly man might write on a similar occasion. But a man who was not godly, or who was less responsive to divine influences, might not have written at all; or he might have claimed Onesimus as a sort of ecclesiastical due; or he might have asked a reward before sending him back; or he might have urged that slavery was so abolished—abolished by the law of Christ—that the legal rights of Philemon were extinguished.

But S. Paul had higher, or at least larger, work to do than writing even such letters as the *Epistle to Philemon*. He had "to preach the Gospel," to found and organize churches, to set ministers over them, and sometimes superintendents over those ministers. He had to instruct the churches, reprove their misconduct, correct their errors, stimulate them to works of Christian charity. And if a man was to do this effectually, he must be raised above himself by habitual communion with the Divine Spirit. It might also be necessary

that he should receive—as, in fact, S. Paul did receive—direct *revelations* of truths which, otherwise, he could never have perceived; though spiritual truths, even when made known by miraculous communication, can only be “spiritually discerned”; and inspiration is not identical with revelation. What, then, do we find in S. Paul’s greater epistles—such as the *First to the Corinthians*—to indicate that he really did live in this habitual communion with the Divine Spirit? We find great clearness of intellect and directness of insight. But this we find also, and possibly in a higher degree, in other writers, who are far from giving any indications that they were peculiarly responsive to divine influence. The peculiarity of S. Paul’s intellectual power is in the fact that it is inseparable from a remarkable moral and spiritual elevation. It is so inseparable from these that it sometimes seems to be the direct effect of them. He looks at life, inward and outward, from the divine side; sees it as one might see it who had just come down from “talking with God face to face, as a man talks with his friend.” He loves men, all men, with a love stronger than death, for he loves them and longs for them “in the bowels of Jesus Christ.” His regard for God elevates him at once above personal vanity and ambition, and above the fear of man and respect of persons. He sees in every particular case an eternal principle, and therefore he sets forth these eternal principles as sufficient for all needs of practical guidance. He seeks to destroy party spirit, not by attempting to settle disputes or mediate between the claims of rival leaders, nor even by some kind of eclecticism, but by affirming the infinite worth of love. He does not content himself with giving minute direc-

tions about rites and ceremonies—these he defers till “he shall come”—but he urges the necessity of decency and order. He would have men keep themselves pure by the recollection that they are the temples of the Holy Ghost. Nobody who reads them can fail to be impressed by these characteristics of S. Paul’s epistles. And they are the more impressive because of the entire absence of all boast of special supernatural inspiration—because they are so full of S. Paul. If he had written treatises on the same subjects, they might have been even more perfect than his letters in style and logical arrangement; but they would have lacked that *personal* element which is an essential condition of inspiration. A book cannot be inspired, an argument cannot be inspired; for spirit can only commune with spirit, the living God with the living man.

And if we judge of the reality of inspiration from its effects in a man’s life, or work, or writings, we shall find no difficulty in understanding why the Sacred Scriptures have been set apart, above all others, as “given by inspiration of God.” The Church—any Church—may give them authority as books to be accepted as conclusive evidence of doctrine or discipline in that Church; but this imparts to them only a technical and legal value. And a Canon of Scripture authorized by one Church may differ from the Canon authorized by another. The Roman Church adopts for ecclesiastical uses many of the Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament which we, for those uses, reject. But no Church can give real, intrinsic value to any book. Nor are the *Sacred Books of the East* or the *Iliad of Homer* less spiritually valuable simply for lack of recognition by an Ecumenical Council. The whole differ-

ence is in *the matter and spirit* of them. It is possible—though I by no means find it very easy—to select from the *Koran*, for instance, many passages sublime or beautiful, or spiritually ennobling. For the most part it is as dry and barren as the Arabian Desert. But in spite of “elegant extracts,” who could say, for a moment, of the *Koran*, “This book is ‘given by inspiration of God’”? It does not uniformly regard life from the divine side. It does not produce the impression that it is the result of habitual communion with the Eternal. It is not raised above pride, and passion, and vulgar expediency, and local prejudices. It is not “a possession forever.” It can never produce, or even tolerate, a “universal religion.” And much less even can we discover these high qualities in the Sacred Books of the Buddhists; for if we go to the very bottom, we shall find that Buddhism starts from what is equivalent to atheism, and ends in what is equivalent to annihilation.

And if it be urged as an objection that, on this showing, we may find evidence of inspiration elsewhere than in the Canonical Scriptures, I would reply, first of all, “Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets!” And again I would reply, “As in the common life of men ‘the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance,’ and wherever these are, in or out of the Church, within Christendom or outside of it, *there is the Spirit*; so we find the Spirit also wherever, in the literature of the world, ‘sacred’ or ‘profane,’ we find pure truth, ennobling principles, just moral judgments, divine standards of character and conduct. And wherever the Spirit of God influences the spirit of man, *there is Inspiration.*” Nor is the objection of

which I am speaking of any *practical* importance. As a matter of fact the inspiration of the writers of the Holy Scriptures has proved itself by innumerable verifications of experience, in every age, in every land, in every class of society, in countless millions of human hearts and lives.

And now I come to the second part of the passage which I read to you as the text—the part in which S. Paul tells us what his work as an Apostle *was not*, and also *what it was*. And here we have a conspicuous example of that enriched personality, that daring freedom, which cannot fail to be a result of a true inspiration. A man less inspired, less possessed by the very spirit of truth, would never have ventured to express himself with the audacity of S. Paul. He would have been afraid of being misunderstood; perhaps he would have been more nobly afraid of misleading others. He would have had in his mind not only the precise truth he wanted to affirm, but also what, by a strange perversion of the meaning of S. Paul's words, is called "the analogy of the Faith."* It would probably never have occurred to him to say that Christ did not send him to baptize; but if it had occurred to him, he would unquestionably have hesitated to say it. He would have reflected that Baptism was a Sacrament of Christ's own institution; and that

*It may be worth while to add a note on this passage, *Romans* xii. 6. The grammatical structure is involved, but the Greek of verse 6 is: Ἐχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα, εἴτε προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως. . . . This is rendered, in the Revised Version, "according to the proportion of our faith." It is obvious that the ἀναλογίαν corresponds to ἐκάστῳ ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἐμέρισεν μέτρον πίστεως, in verse 3. In that verse μέτρον πίστεως must surely

He really did send His Apostles to make disciples of all nations, "baptizing them." And he would have been right—exactly for lack of inspiration. It needs no special inspiration to formulate Creeds or Articles of Religion; what is needed for *that* work is logical acumen and adroitness, and above all a steady and comprehensive view of a whole body of facts and doctrines, which seem at first sight mutually exclusive,

be taken *subjectively*. But I add the comment of Alford, Meyer, and Dr. E. H. Gifford in "The Speaker's Commentary." Alford says: "*According to the proportion . . . of faith. But what faith? Objective (fides quæ creditur), or subjective (fides qua creditur)? The faith, or our faith?* The comparison of μέτρον πίστεως above, and the whole context, determine it to be the latter: the measure of *our* faith: 'quisque se intra sortis suæ metas contineat, et revelationis suæ modum teneat, ne unus sibi omnia scire videatur,'" etc., etc. Meyer says (English translation published by T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh—*Romans* ii. 259): "*Conformably to the proportion of their faith the prophets have to use their prophetic gift—i. e. (comp. verse 3), they are not to depart from the proportional measure which their faith has, neither wishing to exceed it nor falling short of it, but are to guide themselves by it, and are therefore so to announce and interpret the received ἀποκάλυψις, as the peculiar position in respect of faith bestowed upon them, according to the strength, clearness, fervour, and other qualities of that faith suggests—so that the character and mode of their speaking is conformed to the rules and limits which are implied in the proportion of their individual degree of faith. In the contrary case they fall, in respect of contents and of form, into a mode of prophetic utterance either excessive and overstrained, or, on the other hand, insufficient and defective (not corresponding to the level of their faith),*" etc., etc. And surely we all need to be warned not to *exceed our belief* in our teaching, nor to *fall short of it*. Dr. Gifford (in the *Speaker's Commentary, Romans* xii. 6), says: "S. Paul prescribes that the prophets should

and can only be made to appear true or fit into a system after skilful adaptation and considerable pruning. As we contrast genius, which is creative, with criticism, which is analytic, so we may contrast the logical, grammatical, rhetorical skill which produces a Creed, with the inspiration which realizes and proclaims a Gospel. S. Paul is logical; but his logic is on fire: it is the logic of enthusiasm, not of the schools. It takes much for granted. It sometimes leaps over an obvious premiss, or leaves unexpressed a conclusion which may be trusted to draw itself. So he said exactly what he meant about his Apostolic work, because being inspired he was daring. *Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.*

How different the history of the Church would have been if only she had believed S. Paul! how different her power would be if she believed him to-day! Through long ages of darkness she acted as if the reverse of these words were true; as if God had sent His ministers not to preach the Gospel, but to baptize.

exercise their gift 'according to the proportion of their faith.' These words evidently refer to v. 3, and mean that the prophets should utter neither more nor less than the revelation received by their *measure of faith*, without exaggeration, display or self-seeking. 'The rule of faith,' 'general analogy of revealed truth,' and all similar renderings which make '*faith*' mean that which is to be believed, are unsuited to the context and otherwise untenable." For, indeed, when S. Paul wrote the *Epistle to the Romans*, where was there a body of authorized dogma which would have been at once recognized as "the faith"—the faith as distinguished from heresy? Scarcely a more useful task could any of our younger clergy undertake, for their own improvement, than a careful examination of every passage in which the word *πίστις* occurs. Take Bruder's *Greek Concordance* for the purpose.

Baptism was too simple to be understood by theosophists on the one hand, or half-civilized and superstitious pagans on the other. *An evil and adulterous generation* wanted not a Sacrament, but a charm; not "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," but that the grace itself should be outward and visible. They inverted the teaching of S. Peter, and paid more regard to *the putting away of the filth of the flesh than to the interrogation of a good conscience toward God.*

The Gospel at the first was preached to individuals, to grown-up men and women; and when they believed they were baptized. They were "grafted into the body of Christ's Church." Disappearing under the cleansing waters, they were *buried with Christ*; rising out of them, they arose *to newness of life*. The old life was gone, they were *new creatures*. They had arisen and come to their Father; and they were recognized as His children, and received the promise of their Father's Spirit, already given to them and never to be withdrawn. Their baptism was the seal that marked them as God's; and on the other hand it was their vow of allegiance and obedience as God's faithful soldiers and servants. Obviously enough, then, their baptism meant nothing at all without *the Gospel*, meant nothing at all to them but as they believed the Gospel. But what was true of them was true also, in its measure, of their children. Were those little ones, *whose angels do always behold the face of the Heavenly Father*, lying under some ancestral curse? Were they to be treated as aliens and outcasts until they arrived at years of discretion? Were they to be allowed to fall into sin, and then to be with difficulty converted; or

were they to be *trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord* because they were really His children? Christian instinct—I might almost say parental instinct—answered these questions; and Infant Baptism proclaimed with unmistakable emphasis the all-embracing love of Him who, looking into every cradle, into every child's face, says, *It is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.*

But when speculation had exhausted itself upon the nature of God and the person of Christ; when it passed from east to west; when it turned from theology to anthropology, and began to occupy itself with Free Will and Grace, the Fall and Original Sin, it was impossible that the doctrine of Baptism should maintain its primitive simplicity. What could *the laver of regeneration*, what could being *born of water*, mean, if it had no reference to our first birth as descendants of the first Adam; the Adam who had fallen and who had dragged^d the whole race along with him? Infant Baptism, which had been the most emphatic symbol of the redemption of *the world*, of *the whole human race*, was now regarded as a conclusive evidence that the whole world was not redeemed; that men had sinned in Adam before they were born; and that *Baptism*—and not the *Incarnation*—was absolutely necessary to redeem them from the curse, to give them a new nature, or to restore to them that which Adam had lost. “How can it be said truly,” S. Augustine asks concerning little children—founding an argument for the absolute necessity of Baptism upon the words *He that is not with Me is against Me*—“how can it be said truly that they are against Christ, excepting on account

of sin? For it cannot be on account of their body or their soul, both of which were created by God. But if it is on account of sin, what sin can it be, at that time of life, but original sin? ”*

Thenceforward it became necessary, in order to understand the nature and effect of Baptism, to understand the nature of man before the Fall, and the effect of the Fall upon that nature. Here was a vast region of thought in which speculation might well run wild; for no human being, except our first parents, has ever known what “unfallen” human nature was. Did it consist in perfect knowledge, or a holy will, or an indwelling spirit? Then, by the undisputed fact of Adam’s transgression, it was just as possible to sin *with* these advantages as without them. If Adam could “fall” without “a corrupt nature,” what could be the need of assuming a corrupt nature for the purpose of accounting for the repeated “falls” of his posterity? And if the very nature of any creature has become not only changed, but inverted, how can it be the same creature any longer except in name? But, at a later period and by a further development, the nature of man *as he is* was represented in a manner for which observation and experience furnish no warrant. The *Assembly’s Catechism*, to take a comparatively modern dogmatic formulary, describes man’s present condition as one in which, through the “corruption of his nature,” “he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually: which is commonly called Original Sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.” It may be very safely

* De Peccatorum Meritis, etc., i. 28 (55).

asserted that no such monster as this ever existed; and that if such a one were to come into existence, he would be absolutely irresponsible, because absolutely incapable of either sin or virtue. But when the nature or effects of Original Sin were declared to be such as these, and when the necessity of Baptism was grounded (as by S. Augustine) on the universality of Original Sin, Baptism became absolutely necessary even for producing that change or restoration of nature without which the Gospel would be wholly unintelligible, or even utterly repulsive. What was this but to invert the emphatic declaration of S. Paul, and to affirm that Christ sends His ministers not to preach the Gospel, but to baptize? The Gospel no longer preceded Baptism and gave to it its meaning, but Baptism preceded the Gospel; because without it the very meaning of the Gospel must remain hopelessly and forever unintelligible. But these perilous speculations did not lose their hold upon the minds of men because facts with which everybody was familiar through his own self-knowledge contradicted them. Not only had the Fall not produced the consequences which were attributed to it; but those evils, so far as they did exist, and whencesoever they may have come, were not removed by Baptism. Millions of baptized persons were neither turned away from sin nor won to righteousness. Their baptism produced no discoverable effect on their moral character or their intellectual powers. The proof of their baptism was not in their lives nor in their nature—for what could that be but human nature?—not in these, but in the parish register.

Well may we even now—more now than ever—repeat S. Paul's words, with the emphasis of S. Paul's

audacity—*Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.* For Baptism without, or before, the Gospel is not only worthless, but may be made profoundly mischievous. Separated from the Gospel, treated as a necessary preliminary to the Gospel, as the instrument by which alone we can be made capable of understanding the Gospel or of accepting it, it actually separates us from Christ. We may say of it what S. Paul said of the equally divine Institution of Circumcision: *Behold, I, Paul, say unto you, that, if ye are baptized, Christ will profit you nothing. For in Christ Jesus neither baptism availeth anything, nor being unbaptized, but faith working through love.*

But though no Church in Christendom has accepted, as “of faith,” all the private opinions even of so profound a thinker, so illustrious a doctor, so holy a saint, as the great Augustine; though we may believe that in his endeavour to explain what, in its very essence, is a *disorder*, incapable of explanation, he has gone far beyond our verifiable knowledge of facts, and even tried to soar above the limits of the faculties of human nature—it still remains true that for every human being there is one *fact*, and for every Christian there are two *facts*, wholly beyond dispute. The first is the fact of original sin;* the second is the universal necessity of Baptism, “where it may be had”—and in almost every part of Christendom it may be had with the utmost possible ease.

Does anybody deny that every human being—save only the Son of Man—the Very Man—has fallen into

*The IXth of our *Articles of Religion* is so exceedingly involved and obscure that anybody might subscribe it who is not prepared to deny that “concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.”

sin, into actual transgression?*" Men have been born in all sorts of places, in all stages of culture, surrounded by all sorts of circumstances. In all these cases there has been endless variety of individual opportunity; in *every* case there has been deliberate transgression, not simply of the law of God, but of what each man, woman and child believed to be the law that he or she was bound to obey. There must be *something* to account for this universal disorder. We cannot call it a necessity, for in the region of necessity there can be no such thing as sin. It is something wholly different from a mere *limitation* in our human faculties; for we *cannot* go beyond *them*, and they are themselves ordained of God. It is not necessarily involved in our circumstances, for these, at the worst, can only offer us temptations and inducements to do wrong, and our remorse and shame testify that we might have conquered if we had manfully fought. There is a *something*—universal, inexplicable, real—which is at the bottom of the universal rebelliousness of mankind. We know from our own experience, and from the history of the whole world, that if we would live as we ought to live, we must look beyond ourselves and trust ourselves to the boundless mercy and supernatural grace of God.

And without attempting to explain the relation of Holy Baptism to the Fall; accepting it simply as a means of grace; a channel through which the redeeming power of God flows down upon us; a Sacrament instituted by Christ Himself and placed at the very

* "S. Augustine says that all have sinned 'except the Holy Virgin Mary, concerning whom, for the honour of our Lord, I wish no question to be raised at all, when we are treating of sin.'"—Newman, *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 146 (New Edition, London: Pickering & Co., 1881).

gate of the Divine Kingdom; believing that he who comes to receive Baptism with reverence and faith, does really "wash away his sins"; that no ordinance of Christ's appointment can be a mere barren sign to which no reality corresponds—we may surely affirm that he who refuses to be baptized is living in wilful disobedience to his true Lord, and recklessly depriving himself of sure and immeasurable blessings.

But there is something else needed far more fundamental; something which shall explain Baptism, and the Eucharist, and the Church, and public worship; something which shall determine our innermost relation to Almighty God, and be the source of all righteousness—and that something is the Gospel. What really saves men is the love of God, the grace of God, the free forgiveness of God, a love measured by the Cross of Christ, a love stronger than death, and manifesting itself by an infinite self-sacrifice. This is the ultimate fact which accounts for every other fact in the work of redeeming men from *the empty manner of living handed down from their fathers*, and which itself admits of no other explanation than that *God is love*. We may ask why God gathers men into a divine family, into a Kingdom of Heaven; why He gives us His Spirit; why He *sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world*; and the answer is, Because He loves us. If we ask why He loves us, there is no answer but that God is God.

And the measure of the love of God for us is the Cross of Christ. How much does God love us? So much: *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth His own love*

towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And it is the Cross itself, the love itself, the loving God Himself, who saves us; not some explanation of the conditions or limitations of that love. *Not in wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made void;* lest we should try to find comfort and life in a *doctrine of Atonement*, or in a *philosophy of the plan of salvation*, instead of in Him who makes us one with God, and who Himself redeems us from all iniquity.

NOTE.—The following highly suggestive passage is from Dr. James Martineau's *Types of Ethical Theory* (i. pp. 17-19)—a work whose exceptional merits it would be quite superfluous to commend: "The whole complexion of thought and language on ethical subjects alters on crossing the line from heathendom to Christendom; and even where the Pagan philosopher draws more truly and more severely the outer boundaries of right and wrong, the Christian disciple will show a deeper apprehension of the inner quality and colouring of both. How it was that the new habits of self-knowledge ripened into no systematic ethics, it would be foreign to my purpose to discuss: I will mention but one disturbing cause, which, from its vast and protracted operation, is too remarkable to be overlooked. The Augustinian theology is founded upon a sense of sin so passionate and absolute as to plunge the conscience into unrelieved shadows. It pledges itself to find traces everywhere of the lost condition of humanity, in virtue of which there is no longer any freedom for good, and a hopeless taint is mingled with the very springs of our activity. This doctrine is evidently the utterance of a deep but despairing moral aspiration; it estimates with such stern purity the demands of the divine holiness upon us, that only the first man, fresh with unspoiled powers, was capable of fulfilling them; and since he was false, the sole opportunity of voluntary holiness has been thrown away, and we must live in helpless knowledge of obligations which we cannot discharge. Hence there has never been more than one solitary hour of real

probation for the human race: during that hour there was a positive trust committed to a capable will, and the young world was under genuine moral administration; but, ever since, evil only has been possible to human volition, and good can pass no further than our dreams. It follows that, as the human game is already lost, we no longer live a probationary life, and can have no doctrine of applied ethics which shall have the slightest religious value: the moralities, considered as divine, are obsolete as Eden; and human nature, as it is, can produce no voluntary acts that are not relatively neutral, because uniformly offensive, to the sentiment of God. Its restoration must proceed from sources extraneous to the will; and unless snatched away in some fiery chariot of grace, it must gaze in vain upon the heaven that spreads its awful beauty above the earth. Thus a doctrine which begins with the highest proclamation of the divine moral law, ends with practically superseding it. The history of the universe opens with an act of probation and closes with one of retribution, but through every intervening moment is destitute of moral conditions; and man, the central figure of the whole—though a stately actor at the first, and an infinite recipient or victim at the last—so falls through in the meanwhile between the powers that tempt and those that save him, that as an ethical agent he sinks into nonentity, and becomes the mere prize contended for by the spirits of darkness and of light. In this system, the human personality, by the very intensity with which it burns at its own focus, consumes itself away; and the very attempt to idealize the severity and sanctity of divine law does but cancel it from the actual, and banish it to the beginning and end of time. The man of to-day is no free individuality at all, but the mere meeting-point of opposite forces foreign to his will—ruined by nature, rescued by God—with no range of power, therefore none of responsibility between. It is as if the Augustinian system took its doctrine of nature from Protagoras and Epicurus, and its doctrine of grace from Parmenides and Plato: in the one not reaching so high a level as that of moral obligation; in the other overflying it with a dangerous transcendental wing; and combining therefore, without any mediating term, the extreme tendencies of the physical and metaphysical schools.”

I think it may be well here to add an additional note also, to prevent misunderstanding of what I have said in this sermon about our "fallen nature." I do not see how it is possible for anybody, looking over the history of the world and recollecting his own experience, to doubt the fact of original sin. At any rate, as I have said above, I have not the slightest doubt of it myself; nor do I doubt, in the least, the enormous importance and the terrible consequences of the *first* sin, wherever, whenever, or by whomsoever committed. Then, there, and by the first sinner, "sin entered into the world and death by sin." And remembering that human beings are not disconnected individuals, but constitute a race, I can perceive a profoundly true meaning in S. Paul's words, referring to the first sinner, even as they seem to be represented in the Vulgate translation, *In quo omnes peccaverunt* (Rom. v. 12). But what seems to me in the highest degree dangerous is to commit ourselves to some theoretical explanation of facts which we cannot help admitting, but which we also acknowledge to be in the highest degree mysterious. If I understand their meaning, many theologians have set themselves to solve this problem: How can we account for the fact that every human being whom we have ever known has fallen into sin? And they seem to me to have offered this solution of the problem: Every such person has inherited from some ancestor some kind of corruption, or taint, or defect, or even some positive tendency towards sin. Unquestionably, all the instances of sinful persons that can be produced within our experience are cases of persons who have had sinful ancestors. The induction, therefore, would take some such form as this: The effect B—namely, actual sin—has been in an enormous number of instances preceded by the phenomenon A—namely, a sinful ancestor. If this were enough for a complete induction, we might safely conclude that A was the cause of B. But this is not enough for a complete induction. All these positive instances will be entirely overthrown if a *single negative instance* can be produced; that is to say, if we can find a single instance of a sinful man who had no sinful ancestor; and this is precisely what happens, not only in a particular instance, but in *the crucial* instance in the

7 | history of the whole human race. The very first man who was ever guilty of actual sin was precisely the man who neither had, nor could have had, any inherited corruption. Therefore inherited corruption does not account for actual sin. I offer this argument not as a contribution to theology, but as a reason for hesitating to go far "beyond our tether" in an attempt to explain mysteries which we ourselves admit to be utterly inexplicable. Even theologians would not be the worse for a careful study of Mill's *Logic*, Book III., Chapters viii. and ix. |

SPECULATION AND OBEDIENCE.*

Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me.—S. JOHN XXI. 20–23.

“What is that to thee?” Is it, then, really nothing to us, the weal or woe, the ruin or the salvation, of those whom we love? Is it enough that *our own* souls are safe, and that “we can read *our* title clear to mansions in the sky”? Is the great achievement of religion an intenser selfishness, all the more incurable because it has received a Christian sanction? To ask these questions is to answer them. They have been answered, moreover, both in word and deed, by all the Saints of God, and by Him who is “the Author and Finisher of our faith.”† “Moses returned unto the Lord and said, Oh! this people have sinned a great sin and have made them gods of gold. Yet now if Thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written.”‡ “I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart,” says S. Paul; “for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kins-

* Preached before the Convocation of Baltimore, Md., May 24th, 1878.

† Hebrews xii. 2. ‡ Exodus xxxiii. 31–32.

men according to the flesh.”* “He that is greatest among you,” said Jesus to His disciples—for even at the Last Supper “there was a strife among them which of them should be accounted the greatest”—“let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For . . . I am among you as he that serveth.”† “He saved others, Himself He cannot save.”‡

But there is scarcely need to prove what nobody will soberly deny. Even if S. James’s doctrine that “a man is justified by works and not by faith only”§ has been too often grossly perverted, it still remains true that the works by which men have sought to make sure their own salvation have been for the most part works for the good of others. Crusades for the recovery of the Holy Land; the building and endowment of cathedrals and religious houses; Confraternities and Sisterhoods devoted by life-long vows to the service of the sick and poor; Masses for the suffering souls in Purgatory—these, and such as these, may seem to some of us, perhaps, the splendid follies or contemptible delusions of an obsolete superstition, as to others they have seemed the fading glories of a too rapidly departing faith. But they witness to all of us alike what every age has recognized as the very core and centre of Christian life—that “all our doings without charity are nothing worth,” and that “he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.”|| Was it not well, then, that S. Peter should manifest so loving an interest in “the disciple whom Jesus loved”? “You have told me of *my* future; what can I do for the help

* Romans ix. 2-3.

† S. Luke xxii. 24-27.

‡ S. Mark xv. 31.

§ S. James ii. 24.

|| Romans xiii. 8.

and comfort of my fellow-disciple? If he also has to be 'guided by another and carried whither he would not,' cannot I protect or console him? Thou hast graciously forgiven me, and granted me this token of Thy grace that I may feed Thy sheep and lambs; is there no service that I can specially render for one so faithful and so well beloved as the disciple who is following us?"

But this, unfortunately, was not the question which S. Peter really asked. It was not "What can I do for this man?" but "What shall this man do?" Nay, rather, it was a question more rash and intrusive still. It meant "What wilt *Thou* do with this man? What is to be his future life, what his end?" And it is *this* question which our Lord so emphatically, though so gently, reproves: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me." Our duties to our neighbours arise, indeed, out of the arrangements of God's providence; but this is true not only of their form, but also, and equally, of their occasion and their time. Our duties *yesterday*, whether discharged or neglected, are now over. Our duties *to-morrow* are not yet come; and sufficient for the day are its own evil, its own responsibilities, even its own good. Religion is, for the immense majority of mankind, through the whole of life—and for everybody in by far the greater part of his life—not speculative, but practical. And whereas the possible results of speculation are forever widening, as we read and think and argue, till at last we almost begin to doubt whether there is any answer to our questions, any solution of the riddle of life, any sure dogma, any discoverable truth, the alternatives of duty become narrower and narrower as the necessity

of action is pressed closer and closer upon us, till one single path at last is left open to us, and all our uncertainties and hesitations are silenced by "Follow thou Me."

If only, my dear brethren, we could believe it! But it must be obvious to every one of us that Christian people are for the most part of a far different way of thinking. They are not sunk so low, indeed, as to repudiate obedience, but they prefer what they call "the right of private judgment." When an enlightened Christian man has duly examined the claims of all rival authorities; when he has critically investigated the theology and ethics, the science and common sense, of all competing religions; when, in a word, he has accomplished individually and separately what has never yet been accomplished by the whole human race put together—then, and then only, we are assured he will be in a position to begin to determine *the first of his practical religious duties*. Then, without bias or prejudice, he can offer his first rational prayer; repeat for the first time a creed that he really means; sing his first unimpassioned hymn; adore a God whom he understands; look forward, with a fearless and aweless eye, into a future that he has weighed and measured and analyzed. He will have constructed a religion of his own, liable indeed to reconstruction; provisional, modest, undogmatic; held, therefore, loosely, with an "openness to conviction" that it may be mere moonshine and absurdity—but fairly available for such very moderate practical application as belongs to that residuum of real religion which is left when you have removed, by precipitation or evaporation, everything in human life that anybody cares for. Is religion, forsooth,

to control education, or marriage, or divorce, or social decency, or the ethics of "the press," or politics? Surely to admit this would be to roll back the wheels of Time. Religion is, therefore, nothing more than a working theory about the possible origin and the possible destiny of human beings—admitting, for the sake of argument, that the soul is not a mere function of the brain, and that a living God is the most plausible hypothesis to account for the phenomena of Nature. But the grand characteristic of the religion of "private judgment," the eclectic religion of modern liberalism, is this—it is our own creation; *it* does not find *us*, but we *it*. It has no authority over us, for we made it ourselves; and when we dislike it, we can reform or repeal it. It is the exact contradictory of the religion described by Christ, and again and again in Holy Scripture. "Ye have not chosen Me," says our Lord to His disciples, "but I have chosen you and ordained you"—not to speculate and argue, but—"that ye should go and bring forth fruit."*

A comparatively harmless illustration of the prevalent tendency to prefer speculation to obedience, theory to practice, may be found in the renewed discussion of the future state of the great majority of those who die in sin. They are not, and nobody pretends that they are, what we call "fit for heaven"; but must they forever and ever burn in hell? One of the Canons of Westminster preached, a few months ago,† and published, a series of impassioned sermons on "Eternal Hope." These sermons have been discussed in short, half-conversational papers in the *Contemporary Review*, in *The North American Review*, and else-

* S. John xv. 16.

† 1878.

where. Even the daily press has done its best, in this emergency, to help us to *construct* a heaven and a hell that shall do no violence to modern, and of course enlightened, public opinion. But putting aside—though, alas! only too suggestive—the grotesque absurdities of this popularized controversy, and admitting also the earnest piety and sensitive jealousy for the glory of God’s mercy and truth which it has unquestionably manifested, it seems to me a very conspicuous example of the so-oft-repeated question, “Lord, and what shall this man do?”

Our own Church, indeed, has committed us to no definition of the place or mode of future punishment. Modifying ancient, and indeed Catholic, usages so far as was perhaps required by local peculiarities or necessities, she has avoided any *public* services or ceremonies that might seem to justify the extravagances either of dogma or practice which find their formal expression in “the Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory,” and in “Indulgences.” But she neither denies the Communion of Saints nor limits the mercy of God. Our longings, hopes, anxieties concerning the unseen world and the intermediate state, she leaves to our private devotions. He who presumes to judge “those who are without”; he who determines what ignorance is or is not “invincible”; he who affirms that spiritual suicide is impossible; he who measures the power of “faith, even though so little as a grain of mustard-seed,” or the efficacy even of a dying cry, “God be merciful to me, a sinner!”—seems to me to overpass, with a cruel presumption, the boundaries of orthodoxy no less than of humility. Therefore, concerning any individual, to hope to the end; to abstain

from judgment; to seek relief in prayer; to supersede speculation by "glorying in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"; nothing to extenuate and to set down naught in malice; above all, to trust utterly in the justice and mercy of God—this assuredly is at once our duty and our comfort. But our periodic fevers of speculation do not permit us to be content with this. We must needs have a perfect theory, an answer to every possible question, a reply to the inquiry, "Lord, and what shall *this* man do?" "Is *my father* saved? Am I to believe that *my own mother* is in hell forever?" And we often hear such rash assertions as these: "If I am to believe that my mother is in hell, I must give up religion." Are, then, our relations to one another the cause, instead of the effects, of our relation to Almighty God? and will it be enough to urge at the judgment-seat of Christ, as a sufficient atonement for a godless life, "My punishment will torment also the affectionate hearts of those who love me"? Ah! my brethren, has it not already broken the heart of Him who died on Calvary?

For the controversy of which I am now speaking is not practical, but speculative. If we *could* settle it, and answer every question which really does torment the hearts of a few earnest believers, how would *our duties* be altered one jot or one tittle? About the real responsibilities of other people we know absolutely nothing; with our own we are perfectly familiar. We know the terrific power of our own habits; we know too well how often the "hot iron" sears our own conscience. We know how the devil leads us captive at his will. We have experienced the bondage of iniquity. We know how habits, for evil as well as for good,

harden into character, and become a new and an accursed nature. And are we, then, to defer moral strain and effort until God thinks fit to *satisfy us* that the destiny of some antediluvian sinner is just? Are we to pause in our resolute obedience until we are enabled to calculate to an infinitesimal fraction the profit and loss of sin? You need no such calculation, my brother. As to the buried generations of the past, as to the millions of the heathen, as to the ignorant masses of the population of all great cities, as to our own kith and kin who are "behind the veil"—"what is that to thee?" *You* can render them no aid otherwise, it may be, than by humble prayer. Nor would their state be bettered if they could be placed in your hands instead of God's. "*Follow thou Me.*" If *you* sin *you* will die. In this world, and in every other world, "the wages of sin is death." If you love other people, keep them, by precept and example, out of sin. And if you fail in this service of *others*, remember that *you* still have the same law to live by, the same judgment to await.

But this speculation about the future state seems to me, as I have said, a comparatively harmless speculation—partly because the Church has left this whole subject very largely undefined; and partly because no theory about the future state, outside the ordinary belief among Protestants, has yet found acceptance which does not include a severe punishment or an excruciating discipline for those who, having died in sin, are to be saved at last. Nay more, this controversy may render us the very important service of recalling us to that older doctrine of the intermediate state which Calvinism and Puritanism have done so

much to obliterate. But, unfortunately, there are on all sides of us not so much theories as habits of thought—not so much particular speculations as the love and approval of speculation itself as a peculiar privilege or right or even duty—which may well justify extreme alarm. The reckless demands of private judgment have been advancing, even in the Church, by gigantic strides, until we seem to be threatened almost with an epidemic delirium of conscience. “The popular view of private judgment,” said the author of the well-known *Lectures on the Prophetic Office of the Church*, published forty years ago, “is as follows: that every Christian has the right of making up his mind for himself what he is to believe, from personal and private study of the Scriptures. This, I suppose, is the fairest account to give of it, though sometimes private judgment is considered rather as the necessary duty than the privilege of the Christian, and a slur is cast on hereditary religion as worthless or absurd; and much is said in praise of independence of mind, free inquiry, the resolution to judge for ourselves, and the enlightened and spiritual temper which these things are supposed to produce. But this notion is so very preposterous, there is something so very strange and wild in maintaining that every individual Christian, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, young and old, in order to have an intelligent faith, must have formally examined, deliberated and passed sentence upon the meaning of Scripture for himself, and that in the highest and most delicate and mysterious matters of faith, that I am unable either to discuss or even to impute such an opinion to another, in spite of the large and startling declarations which men make on

the subject.”* Alas! during forty years there has been much moving forward, if not progress. The Sacred Scriptures are less and less read and studied; but they are handled with an ever-increasing irreverence. Lads and lasses dance now on the solemn spaces which the saints of old did not venture to approach until they had put off the shoes from their feet, “because the ground was holy.” The earlier Protestants, who were, not inexcusably, jealous of Church authority, were at least willing to abide by their own judgment or the judgment of Scripture. Their successors have far loftier souls. They claim the right to begin at the beginning—personally, were it only possible, to inspect the manger in Bethlehem; to cross-examine the Blessed Virgin; and to demand a repetition, for every generation and for every individual, of the evidence which was vouchsafed to S. Thomas. “Am I to believe the Resurrection,” says one, “because S. Paul affirms it? I must be myself convinced.” Even so. Everybody must be omnipresent and omniscient; and we may begin to be religious when we have superseded the necessity for religion.

Far other is the discipline by which God guides us in every other department of life. We begin life, and we begin every fresh stage in life, not with knowledge, but with faith, and “we add to our faith virtue.” The experience of the past is stored up for our use in the customs, the laws, the morality, the institutions of the society into which we are born; and these treasures are dispensed to us by parents and guardians, tutors and schoolmasters, and civil governors. To impart this store of accumulated wisdom to each new genera-

* Newman's *Via Media*, I., 145 (1877).

tion is precisely what we mean by education. As we grow to maturity we can reflect upon what we have learned. We begin to understand *why*, as well as to perceive *what*. We can speculate, if we choose, upon the innermost nature and sure test of right and wrong; on the conditions of permanent political greatness; on domestic and social morality. But long before we arrive either at the ability or the inclination for these refined and ennobling inquiries, we have been disciplined into obedience. The demands of the moral law have become for us the undisputed postulates of life. We may theorize on the origin of property, and the wisest distribution of wealth, but nobody proposes to repeal the commandment "Thou shalt not steal." Our judgment has been prejudiced incurably in favour of law and right. And all this is the result not of argument, but of authority and of obedience. Moreover, it will scarcely be denied that upon this foundation of authority and obedience—preceding and for the most part wholly superseding individual speculation and inquiry—the stability of society rests.

Yet against this divine arrangement for the education of each generation of the human race almost every one of the arguments might be urged which seem to many people so conclusive against Church authority. We insist upon obedience in the ordinary training and government of human beings long before we have produced conviction in the intellect or secured the approval of conscience; and we do this though we are neither infallible ourselves, nor are the laws and customs which we enforce infallible. Sometimes the laws press unequally or too hardly; sometimes we misinterpret or misapply them. But nevertheless we

still demand obedience and maintain our authority. And this is a true wisdom which is justified of all her children; it is justified, even more emphatically, by those who have repudiated it. There is no surer sign of the approaching dissolution of a nation than the relaxation of educational discipline; the substitution of persuasion for authority, of liberty for order.

Is it reasonable, then, to expect that in the Church, and in the spiritual education of the race, Almighty God will reverse that divine method of education which He has inwoven in human nature itself and in the very fabric of society? Is faith, which everywhere else is necessary, the condition of all knowledge, the starting-point of all progress, the justification of all obedience—is this faith to become in religion an absurdity, the fruit of knowledge instead of its root, the goal instead of the starting-point? Is it an unmeasurable blessing that we are born into the world the heirs of a vast inheritance of law and morality, under the protection of those who are to put us into actual possession of these treasures, and train us to the use of them? And can it be, at the same time, a misfortune that we are also born of *Christian* parents, and made heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven—a Church polity, a creed, a ritual, a liturgy; and that we are placed under the protection of those who will put us into the actual possession of *these* treasures and train us to the use of *them*? Is the institution of property to be beyond discussion, and the existence of God an open question? Is it the highest wisdom to prejudice, bias, fortify the mind in favour of law and order, so that it may be safe forever from plausible sophistries of rebellion and vice? And is it mean and irrational to

prejudice, bias, fortify the mind in favour of the creed and the Church, so that it may be safe forever from plausible sophistries of heresy and schism and godlessness? Do you ask for an infallible guide in religion before you will submit to be directed in your belief or worship? Where is your infallible guide in morals and legislation? Do you object that your parish priest is no wiser or better than yourself or your neighbours? You may say the same of a justice of the peace. Is the Convention of the Diocese of Maryland a sort of "earthen vessel"? So is the Legislature of the State of Maryland. Are Œcumenical Councils liable to err? So, it has been whispered, is the Congress of the United States.

It cannot be doubted that a process of disintegration is going on rapidly not only among the religious opinions of ordinary society, but even in the Church itself. In any uncertainty or dispute there seems less and less recognition of any authoritative standard. People seem determined in their conduct, in matters religious and ecclesiastical, by their own caprice or impulse. "They don't, for their part, *prefer* this or that; it goes a little further or stops a little sooner than suits their taste. They admit that it may suit other people." As if the conduct of divine service, or the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, or the observance of holy seasons, were intrinsically of no more importance than the changing fashions in millinery, and to be decided by the same appeal to whims and fancies! Does even the silliest person propose that in case of a difference of opinion the Church should give way? If we don't like to keep Saints' Days, for instance, is it more reasonable that Saints' Days should be abolished or

that we should mend our behaviour? "But," you reply, "we don't want anything abolished; we act according to our own views, and leave other people to do the same." I will put this answer into a form more strictly accurate and honest. "The Church is a highly respectable religious society, to which we are, on the whole, proud to belong. It is far more orderly and conservative than the extreme Protestant sects. On the other hand it has no nonsense—none of the extremes of Rome. It suggests rather than commands. It leaves a broad margin for individual peculiarities and preferences. And, at any rate, nobody in our Church pretends to be infallible. Besides, in case of dangerous innovations or disreputable slovenliness, we sooner or later get matters 'fixed' in the General Convention. We have Bishops and Canons and Rubrics, and excellent customs and usages—but, after all, like all modern or modernized institutions, the Church is subject to the will of the people. We never shall come to that, of course, but if any controversy arose on the subject, our constitution is such that even the very doctrine of the Trinity could be modified or expunged to suit modern progress." This is the Church theory that is really the most popular, though even the most reckless would hesitate to carry it out in practice to its logical conclusions. Still it has power enough to paralyze the Church's work. From such a theory, and from the languor and laxity which are its effects, neither Rome nor Sectarianism has anything to fear. Sectarianism has nothing to fear from it, *for it is Sectarianism*. Nor does Rome fear Sectarianism, whether within or without the Church. She fears only a Catholicism more ancient, more submissive, more

unadulterated than her own. But it must be submissive. The Church is not a debating society: it is a body, a kingdom. Its dogmas are not for discussion, but for use. Its Divine Lord *is* a *Lord*, and He does not propose to us that we shall examine His title over and over again, and keep Him waiting for His own throne till we have made convenient modifications in His royal prerogative. "He speaks with authority." "Follow thou Me." "If any man is willing* *to do God's will*, he shall know of the doctrine." This was the claim of Christ at the very beginning, when He called Matthew from the receipt of custom and the sons of Zebedee from their nets. This was the claim of the Apostles, in His name, when they first preached the Gospel and gathered together congregations of believers, and ordained elders, and set in order what was necessary for decency and edification in the divine service. It may seem very natural or even praiseworthy to criticise the foundations of our religion, and criticism implies the right to reject what is found wanting. None the less for that did S. Paul write to the Galatians: "If I or an angel from Heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed." The perfect organization of the Church, as of any human society, will curtail the liberties of some for the greater good of all. To escape the scandal of the Corinthian assemblies we must abolish their license. There will thus be less redundancy of life, but a deeper and steadier current. There will be less inventiveness and originality, but more repose and surer permanence. And as time goes by, as the Apostles one after another are called to their heavenly rest, we find a due pro-

* S. John vii. 17. *εάν τις θέλη τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν*, etc.

vision made for the continuance of their authority and work—and in fact the legacy of S. John is the perfected Episcopacy.* Nay, even by the close of the second century, to quote the words of Canon Lightfoot,† “Episcopacy is so inseparably interwoven with all the traditions and beliefs of men like Irenæus and Tertullian, that they betray no knowledge of a time when it was not. . . . Their silence suggests a strong negative presumption that while every other point of doctrine or practice was eagerly canvassed, the form of Church government alone scarcely came under discussion.”‡ As the government of the Church was consolidated, so was its doctrine protected. The New Testament Canon was formed. The far larger mass of the oral teaching of the Apostles served the purpose of guiding the interpretation of their scanty writings. Their well-remembered practices came to be embodied in Canons and Liturgies and Sacred Offices. Bishop handed down to succeeding Bishop the revered and invaluable deposit—Synod to Synod—Council to Council. As heresies and schisms arose, they were met, one after another, by an appeal to what had always been believed and to what had always been done. Every new definition was a definition of old truth, and the Christian literature of the first four centuries contains a mass of evidence as to the creed and discipline and ritual of the Church from which there can be no appeal but by questioning the authority of the Apostles and the divine foundation of the Church itself. Into this grand inheritance, maintained substantially without change notwithstanding passing corruptions and

* Lightfoot's *Epistle to the Philippians*, 209-212 (2d edition).

† Now Bishop.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

vigorous reforms, we are born. Our Bishops are such in Apostolic succession, in authority, in jurisdiction, as were S. Irenæus and S. Cyprian and S. Augustine. Our Liturgy is in all essentials, and largely almost word for word, the very same as the earliest extant Liturgies of the Eastern Church. Our Creeds are those which have been recited almost exactly as they are recited now for more than fifteen hundred years. Our doctrines are the doctrines handed down by indisputable tradition from the Apostles, proved by Holy Scripture, defined as occasion arose by Œcumenical Councils. The Church into which we have been baptized is for us, in these United States, that one Catholic and Apostolic Church in which every one of us professes to believe. Through her Christ teaches us and governs us. And in an age of almost universal skepticism and endless new experiments in religion and morals, amid the babble of controversy and the boastful pretensions of competing sects, it is with an authority higher than her own that she calls us away from further speculation to practical godliness. It is with a wisdom more than human that she warns us "to hold fast that we have, that no man take our crown"; and not to set out on a path of doubt and discussion of which we are only certain that it will disturb our peace and cool our devotion and relax our energy. If it must be so, alas! let others wrangle who do not pretend to have any fixed dogma or divine guidance or authorized government. Revolutions are ever easy for those who have nothing to lose. Let those try to invent a religion who imagine themselves to be without one. Let those amuse themselves by constructing a Church polity who repudiate history and make light of

the Apostles. "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me."

It may seem humiliating, indeed, deliberately to decline controversy; it may seem even cowardly, as if we were distrustful of the result. But we should remember the immense range of universal discussion, and the extreme danger of committing ourselves to a conflict, not with some one individual who shall have fairly studied, so far as it is possible, the whole subject in dispute; but with any number of picked men, each of whom is a specialist, and has spent perhaps a lifetime in equipping himself for the attack of some small corner of the vast territory the whole of which we undertake single-handed to defend. Thus we are to engage with a Huxley in biology; though biology has only an accidental and not very important bearing on religion and morals, and though, in his own department, Mr. Huxley has probably not a superior in the world. Again, the great question at issue between ourselves and the Church of Rome is the supremacy of the See of S. Peter. The immense majority of good Churchmen have never read a single syllable on this subject—and certainly the same may be affirmed of the immense majority of Romanists. The literature of the question is a considerable library; and an *independent* judgment upon it can be formed only by a minute examination in the original languages of the whole of the Christian writings of at least the first four centuries. And even if this issue were decided in our favour, so far as it can be determined by the explicit testimony of antiquity, Dr. Newman meets us with his theory of development—a theory which, in his hands, includes the whole of modern Romanism, from the doctrine of the Trinity to the veneration of relics and the worship

of images, from the Canon of Scripture to the infallibility of the Pope. The Quaker thinks we have no right to express an opinion about the ecclesiastical eccentricities or peculiar doctrines of his sect till we are familiar with, at least, Barclay's *Apology*. How many of us have read it? Which of us has given an independent study to Mormonism, in Mormon books and in the usages and opinions of Mormon men and women? There is a sect of "Christians who object to be otherwise designated." Which of us knows anything accurately about them? It is highly edifying to consider what was the origin and beginning of the supposed supernatural inspirations and revelations of Emanuel Swedenborg. "One night in London, after he had dined heartily, a kind of mist spread before the eyes of Emanuel Swedenborg, and the floor of his room was covered with hideous reptiles, such as serpents, toads, and the like. 'I was astonished,' he says, 'having all my wits about me, and being perfectly conscious. The darkness attained its height and then passed away. I now saw a man sitting in the corner of the chamber. As I had thought myself entirely alone, I was greatly frightened when he said to me, "Eat not so much." My sight again became dim, and when I recovered it I found myself alone in the room.' The following night the same thing occurred. 'I was this time not at all alarmed. The man said, "I am God, the Lord, the Creator and Redeemer of the world. I have chosen thee to unfold to men the spiritual sense of the Holy Scripture. I will Myself dictate to thee what thou shalt write." ' '*"

* Maudsley's *Body and Mind* and *Psychological Essays* (Appleton, N. Y.), 1876, pp. 185-186.

Such being the foundation of the "Church of the New Jerusalem," are we to be considered irrational if we deem it a preposterous waste of time to examine the superstructure?

Do you decide to build your religion on controversy, to challenge all comers, to accept only what you have independently proved, and believe only what you have personally verified? Be it so—but how long do you propose to live? Are you sure that you can be released from every other occupation? You must first make good your position against the materialists and atheists and pantheists, and against all the separate forms of their Protean errors. You must decide the "divine legation" of Moses, and the Messiahship of Jesus. You must go through the details of the Arian heresy and the Donatist schism. You must decide upon the claims of the Papacy and the justification of the Reformers. Of these last you must do separate battle with Luther and Calvin, with Laud and the Puritans, with Wesley and Pusey. You must further investigate the conflicting pretensions of the different sorts of Presbyterians and Methodists, Quakers and Baptists. And while these are the main lines of the road along which you propose to travel militant, you will find innumerable bypaths at the end of every one of which is lurking a foe. And when you have fought your good fight with other people's opinions, and arrived at a truth which will really satisfy your intellect, you will then have to begin the real business of life—which is to fear God and to keep His Commandments. If this long research be included in the duty of every intelligent Christian, it is perfectly obvious that there lives not on the face of the whole

earth one intelligent Christian who has even approximately discharged his duty. A duty impossible is a contradiction even in terms; and this were an impossible duty.

No, my dear brethren, we are called to no task so idle and at the same time so presumptuous, so monstrously beyond our powers. It is by no means clear that any formal proof of our religion is generally needed—it only becomes necessary when our souls are sick. It is the dyspeptic that gets his food analyzed and consults his physician about the processes of digestion. Blessed, rather, is the man who has never need to ask whether his food is nutritious, and who “does not know that he has a system”!* But even if it should become necessary for us to prove our own belief, it is by no means necessary for us to *disprove* other people’s *misbelief*. Our religion comes to us like a mother’s love, like a father’s protecting care. It is ready for us at our birth. It proves its power by being the guide of our spiritual energy. It brings God near to us, and us near to God. It expresses and deepens our piety. It orders our lives. It comforts us amid the troubles of life, in sickness, in bereavement, in the valley of the shadow of death. It needs no other proving; and if any one should feel it his duty—for what will conscience not require?—to *disprove* for us our religion, we should receive him with the feeling with which we should listen to the accusations of a candid friend who should endeavour to persuade us of a father’s dishonour or of the unchastity of a mother. Granted that we take our religion on trust—that most of us accept it on the

* Cf. Carlyle’s “Characteristics” (*Essays*, III 329, *et seqq.* Library Edition).

unexamined but continuous evidence of twenty centuries—what more does infidelity or heresy or schism offer to us? Not, assuredly, an independent judgment; but that we shall exchange faith in the Church for faith (shall I say?) in Wesley or Swedenborg, in Mr. Huxley or Mr. Robert Ingersoll.

But, assuredly, to avoid speculation is not the whole duty of man. Our Lord's question to S. Peter—"What is that to thee?"—should be forever sounding in our ears. But far more important still is His command, "Follow thou Me." This must be the secret of our own life; it is the secret of the life of the Church. May God give us grace to set Him before men neither by our orthodoxy alone, nor by the simplicity of our acceptance of the truth, but by utter obedience and by "endeavouring ourselves to follow the blessed steps of Christ's most holy life"! "For the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power"; . . . "not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

MANLY STRENGTH.*

Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man.—
I. KINGS ii. 1-2.

Nothing is more common than for men to perceive and rebuke in others the vices and neglects which they fail to notice in themselves. Time glides so noiselessly away from them, and the changes produced by a single hour or day are so slight, that it is only at some critical period of their lives, when they are compelled to compare the present with a somewhat distant past of their history and experience, that they discover how much has come to them and how much has gone forever. When they revisit the scenes of their childhood; when they read over again some book, once a favourite, now almost forgotten; when they meet an old friend who has achieved some great commercial success, or reached a proud eminence in literature or scholarship; when they have to decide where their children shall be educated, or what shall be the trade or profession by which they shall seek to make their way in the world—at such times they are startled to find what vast changes have silently been wrought in them by the greatest of all innovators, Time. They get that rare and exceptional view of *themselves* which is their common view of *others*—they see themselves *after an absence*.

* This sermon was addressed especially to young men (London, 1863).

It would be a strange life indeed that could be reviewed without thankfulness. They are very few, and must have been very unfortunate, who would ask for the doubtful privilege of living life over again. Yet, though we are increasingly diffident of ourselves, we think we can see the folly of others, and warn and help them. Moreover, we cannot avoid the regrets which, alas! are now unavailing. We see how a little more diligence and care would have made us as rich as our wealthiest friends; how more patient and persevering study would have raised us also to literary eminence. And we mourn and fret that now we must die obscure, no grand victory won, either material or spiritual. Is there no path left to an immortality of fame?—no road still open to commercial prosperity, to intellectual culture, to moral and spiritual greatness? Must we, indeed, die and be forgotten because we have done nothing to deserve remembrance?

It is not religion only—it is our very human nature that longs for immortality. Our power of thought, our affections, shrink back from nothingness with the utmost horror. Every unsolved problem, every unaccomplished purpose, every dear and loving friend, demands that we should still live on; our pleasures we would live to enjoy, our griefs and misfortunes we would live to master; we would live to serve our friends, we would live to wring even from our enemies the acknowledgment that we deserved better from them than hatred or scorn.

Whatever crazy Sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly longed for death.

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant—
Oh, life, not death—for which we pant ;
More life, and fuller, that we want.*

Often this passionate longing for personal immortality spends itself in the endeavour to make our children all that we so ardently and so vainly wish that we ourselves could have been ; and as the task becomes harder, and, above all, when it becomes impossible, we yearn to accomplish it with a very agony of desire. It is this which gives to the counsels of the dying their wondrous depth and power. It is this which strove for utterance when “the days of David drew nigh that he should die ; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth : be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man.” We feel that *we* have been *weak* ; that our manhood has been dwarfed or distorted. We would have our children far nobler than ourselves, and yet *our* children, carrying on our work, and in a manner our very selves, into future generations.

Yet, perhaps, the advice of David to his son, especially when applied for our own guidance in these Christian ages, may seem poor and inadequate. Is this all, we may be inclined to ask, that a dying father has to say—“Be strong and manly” ? It must, indeed, be acknowledged that there is nothing here specifically Christian ; nothing that any one creed or sect can monopolize, either for evil or good. But is not this an advantage ? Is it not well that there are holy precepts that we may take without controversy even to “Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics” ? May not such precepts suggest a real brotherhood and become the occasion of

* Tennyson : *The Two Voices*.

an actual fellowship? And, in truth, what can the highest practical teaching of all religion be but this—“Show thyself *a man*”? On either side of such counsel there are unfathomable depths of sin and folly. “Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” At the same time, we must remember what true human nature is. To live according to nature is virtue; yet, on the other hand, it may be urged that the state of nature is a state of war, and that he alone can be virtuous who lives above nature. The ambiguity vanishes when we adopt the word “man” instead of “human nature.” Be a man; partaking, indeed, of flesh and blood, yet none the less a spirit to whom “the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding.” We cannot rise higher than our manhood; we need not and we ought not to sink below it. This would scarcely be denied even by those who sometimes seem to speak of human nature as if it were an accursed thing to be utterly abolished. They speak of a “new birth,” a “new creature,” a “new man,” as if these expressions implied either that we are not human now, or that if we would please God we must cease to be so. In either case David’s advice to Solomon must be completely irrelevant, and quite incapable of being accommodated to our own use. But in truth there is no theory of total depravity, and there is no theory of regeneration, which is not compelled to recognize the fact of human responsibility, and the possibility of virtue and vice. We may, therefore, boldly adopt the words of the text; we may say to ourselves and to one another, “You are not so bad as to have utterly lost intellect and conscience, and the power of becoming

better ; you may be a wicked man and a foolish man, but you are a man still. Cast away then your sin and folly, and live by that ‘inspiration of the Almighty which gives you understanding.’ Remember, too, that that divine help is your birthright as a man ; the very glory that distinguishes you from the beasts that perish.”

And surely, without presuming upon any profound knowledge of the world, or of the age we live in, it is plain to the most superficial observer that we are in great need of the counsel, “Be thou strong.” The age itself, perhaps, is strong ; armies, governments, the masses, the numerical majorities—these, perhaps, are strong, but the individual is weak. It has been well said that civilization, in spite of all that is good and beautiful in it, tends to destroy individuality, and all the variety and beauty which the freest possible development of individuality can alone secure. If it be so, civilization tends also to destroy itself. It must end, as hitherto it always has ended, in corruption and ruin. The *minority* has been, in every case, the salt of the earth. All progress, and every kind of reformation, have come from the few, not from the mass. Again and again has an Athanasius been against the world. If even Christianity itself can save society from decay, it will be because it takes every separate man, isolates him from his fellow-creatures, sets him alone before the judgment-seat of Almighty God, and bids him answer for his own thoughts, words and deeds. It declares, indeed, that we are members one of another, that humanity is one body ; it preaches a brotherhood more comprehensive than any fraternity that the world has ever seen. But, at the same time, it declares that

we are members in particular, and assures us that no shouts of the multitude, how loud soever, can make our softest whisper inaudible; and that we shall be judged not according to the public opinion or the fashions of our day, but according to our own works. Even in the interests then of that civilization which seems so incompatible with individual energy and force of character, we ought to lay to heart the counsel, "Be thou strong."

But does civilization tend to make us feeble? It may, perhaps, be necessary to offer some few illustrations of what I have assumed to be a fact. It is plain, at any rate, that in everything requiring physical strength the individual is of less and less value. The strength of Homeric heroes would be useless on a modern battlefield, and nations no longer entrust the settlement of their quarrels to the fortunes of a duel. Goliath of Gath would only be a better mark for the bullet of a rifleman. It is not the strength of individuals that is now needed, but the organization and discipline of vast masses—nay, the great battles of our own age are fought out as much by chemists and mathematicians as by the soldiers who slay and are slain. So also in the works of peace, in the productive labour of what we call the working-classes, individual strength counts almost for nothing. Wind and water and steam do now the work that heretofore could be performed only by human force and toil. Division of labour, skill, organization, combination—these are now needed, and not individual strength. At the same time, it would be most unfortunate that the physical perfection of the human race should degenerate. It is impossible to separate bodily vigour from vigour of

spirit, however carefully and accurately we may distinguish the two. And there is a peculiarly obvious connection between bodily strength and courage, even that kind which we call moral courage. When war becomes a matter of science and money, politics themselves become effeminate. The horror of bloodshed and the fear of pain overpower the horror of tyranny and the fear of national disgrace. Commerce would sacrifice even the honour of the fatherland for the sake of a new market; "selling its birthright," as it were, "for a mess of pottage." And, in truth, that moral cowardice which simply yields to the majority, which dares have or utter no opinion of its own, which would rather perish with the many than be saved among the noble army of martyrs, may be more closely connected than we are in the habit of remembering with physical weakness. "Be thou strong," therefore; take good heed that your body is so braced and exercised that you may not be the sport of sick fancies and nervous excitements. Seek to acquire and to preserve such vigour of nerve and muscle that every little rumour of danger shall not have power to scare you into silence and obscurity. Do not lose altogether the faculty of a noble and righteous anger; and remember that there is a spirited element in human nature which is to be the ally of reason in subduing the flesh to its will. Inasmuch as the animal in a man is to be the instrument or slave of the spiritual, take care that the instrument be perfect, and the slave in such health and vigour that he may do the full measure of his work.

The same individual weakness may be observed in the intellectual culture, the general education of our day. There was a time when education was monopo-

lized by a very few. For the "lower classes" to wish to be taught was deemed an insufferable impertinence. What right had they to push themselves out of their proper station, and thrust themselves into the place of their betters? Especially what would become of the privileged few if the unprivileged many were allowed to compete with them? Still education in those old times was, of its kind, thorough. It was not first useful, and then, if a happy chance would have it so, human. It was first of all human, and therefore in every case useful. It was the education of the man, and not of the tradesman, the physician, the lawyer, or the divine. It did not seek to train a youth for some particular station in life, into which he might after all never enter, and out of which a thousand accidents might remove him; its aim was to make a man of him, that so he might be fit for any station whatever. It had to do with genuine studies, not mere accomplishments, whether of the useful or of the ornamental kind. No doubt it had its defects. It chose too often to *stop* at principles, not caring to deduce from them the precepts which would have connected them with ordinary life. It knew little, and therefore could impart little, of those physical sciences which fill so large a space in our most modern thought and teaching. Nay, there was a point of view from which it denied them to be sciences at all; for they were concerned with ever-changing phenomena, not with substance; with that which *seems*, not with that which *is*. Yet the learned were not unwilling to acknowledge that they had freely received in order that they might freely give; and the unlearned began to demand that they might be made acquainted with the principles

and not only the precepts by which life may be wisely guided. So in the end it has come to pass that there is education for everybody who chooses to take it. Unhappily, it is education of the useful kind rather than of the human. It trains men for some particular station in life, not for life itself. It can see no good in much which seemed in former days to be the only good. It used to be believed—and, for my part, I believe it still—that the science of language, for instance, can be learnt most accurately in the old classic languages; that there we can most surely find the true philosophy of language, and discover the mystical relation between the Reason and the Word. But Boston and New York, Manchester and Birmingham, carry on no correspondence in ancient Greek and Latin; and a man may learn quite easily to talk pretty nothings in Italian or French. The classics educate the *man*; modern languages, when they are studied for their utility rather than their literature, the *merchant* or the *traveller*. Even in the department of the physical sciences, which are unquestionably “useful,” there is a tendency to popularize rather than thoroughly teach them. And though even a slight knowledge of those innumerable facts which observation and experiment have accumulated and tested—and much more a knowledge of the best method of arranging and classifying them—is greatly to be preferred to mere ignorance, yet the very multitude of facts and of the sciences which are based upon them may easily weaken, almost to uselessness, our mental forces by scattering them over too wide a region. The thorough study and accurate knowledge even of a single science will require and increase our strength;

will need and will confirm those habits of accuracy which can never fail to be useful, because, in fact, they belong to the truly human discipline. But to learn results while we know nothing of the process by which they have been obtained, only encumbers the memory; puffs us up with the mere conceit of knowledge, while we are without the reality; conceals from us the difference between the quantity and the quality of the facts which are employed as evidence and proof of scientific propositions; and, in a word, leads us back again to that careless and fruitless induction from which it was the great aim of the philosopher whom physical science most delights to honour to set us free. When there is so much to be learned; when almost every year a new science or application of science delights or alarms us; when science is becoming more and more plainly connected with our daily life and even our religious belief; when it seeks to determine now the antiquity and now the origin of the human race; when it bids us approach through anatomy and physiology the theories and beliefs which we have hitherto arrived at only through scripture or history; it becomes us to acquire, not mere adroitness and skill in concealing our ignorance or bringing into prominence what little show of knowledge we may have, but genuine intellectual strength, the power fairly to grapple with the difficulties of at least some one department of truth, that so we may be safe both from the pride and the panics of that folly which is always weak, that weakness which is always foolish. Surely in the midst of sophistry and pretension there is need of this counsel, "Be thou *strong*." Gain an independent knowledge of *something*, however slight—let

there be something that you yourself have really verified, something that you have not taken wholly on trust; in understanding be a man. Guard yourself against the danger of being hurried away by every new theory, every plausible hypothesis. Learn at least how to choose your guides; and remember that you will learn that only by being yourself a traveller and knowing *some* road for yourself. The older culture, feeble with age, eclipsed by the splendour of its far more brilliant rivals, silenced by the clamour of noisy pretenders, derided as useless by a generation that cares more for fruit than for the tree on which it grows, seems to be calling us, as David called Solomon, to receive the counsels of a mature but departing wisdom—"I am going the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man."

Even our very amusements seem more and more to be growing feeble. It is well indeed that there should be amusements, and that they should be such in reality and not in name. It is well that they should afford relief from severe study, and be diversions in the sense of actually diverting the mind from what, without such relief, would too greatly strain and fatigue it. But the reason and the intellect of a man should scorn to find such diversion only in the gratification of the senses; and the changes in the use of words which even the last few years have witnessed, write only too truly the history of social degeneracy. The new meaning of the word *sensation*, for instance, may afford to some future Dean of Westminster some bitter paragraphs on the "morality in words." He will find in that new meaning the evidence that civilization in England and in most "progressive" nations, in the

latter half of the nineteenth century, had arrived at that stage when men can scarcely live without feverish and hysterical excitement; and when cowardice, and effeminacy, and affectation, change into cruelty and the keen enjoyment of danger to limb and life. The diversions and amusements of literature are now "*sensation*" stories. A music-hall can now scarcely ensure a crowded audience excepting by the grossest exaggerations of a folly that has no wit; or by some infatuated man or woman encountering the risk, by no means remote, of life-long torture or a horrible and sudden death. These amusements are surely beneath the dignity of human nature, and are scarcely to be preferred to Spanish bull-fights, or the contests of the old Roman gladiators. And it must be remembered that it is not the lower orders who are rising to these enjoyments, but the soberer and better-instructed who are sinking to them. From the pot-house to cheap theatres may be a social and intellectual elevation. In those of them,* indeed, which are largest and best conducted, it is impossible to deny that, with much danger and not a little evil, there are not wanting many elements of good. It is impossible to watch the eager, upturned faces of the vast assemblies which crowd these enormous edifices—four, five, even six thousand of them—without perceiving that for a few short hours at least they are contented and happy. They do not sit with the listless indifference of the used-up man of fashion; nor, on the other hand, is it only the performance and the acting in which they are interested. They hiss from the stage, not the bad

* This refers especially to some of the very large cheap theatres of London.

actress, but the bad woman, the *confidante* who betrays her trust, the cheat and the deceiver. They applaud, not so much the man who can well represent the noblest emotions, and exhibit almost as in actual life heroic courage, but the man who happens to have these virtues to represent, however indifferently he may play his part. When the weak and delicate maiden is rescued from the grasp of some ferocious and cowardly assailant, her deliverance is greeted with a shout of enthusiasm which comes assuredly from no refinement of the critical faculty, but from real generosity of heart. Nor is the morality of the cheap theatres always inferior to the morality of some of the most popular operas. But from those sensation entertainments in which the middle classes seek some relief from the dull routine of their ordinary life, and too often also from the utter emptiness of their understandings, it seems impossible to bring away anything approaching to genuine cheerfulness, or the recollection even of a laughter that was not too insincere to be better than "the crackling of thorns under a pot." Young men especially seem growing too feeble even heartily to play; and they need to be reminded that it is only the strong man who can retain through life, in spite of all its burdens and disappointments, the joyous simplicity and playful gladness of a little child.

But the febleness of the age manifests itself most completely and most ominously in the tame submission of the individual to the tyranny of majorities. The *formation* of public opinion is one of those mysteries that it would seem impossible to solve. Action and reaction are here so rapid and so intricate, that it is almost impossible to determine what is cause and what

is effect. Do the speeches, for instance, that are made at a public meeting create, or even to a great degree modify, the opinion of an audience? Do they not, on the other hand, simply echo the opinion that has been already formed, and gain their enthusiasm from a sympathy already existing and strong? A temperance meeting is made up of people the majority of whom are already pledged to total abstinence, and who are present not because they need convincing, but because they are convinced already. The orators of our great religious societies make their appeals not to enemies, but to friends. So also in political and even parochial affairs it seems impossible to discover how a public opinion is produced, and whether the platform and the press are its creatures or its creators. The modern press itself, that great bulwark of liberty, that new power which boasts to be stronger even than parliaments or courts of justice—even this must pay the penalty of familiarity, and can be no hero to its valets. The awful “we” is very often discovered to be a very meek and commonplace gentleman, quietly “doing,” mainly with the aid of a pair of scissors, the noblest institutions and the silliest hobbies of the age. Every newspaper must flatter the existing public opinion, and not create a better; or, at the highest, can only by slow degrees, and with the most anxious and sensitive prudence, modify the theories and calm the passions of men. Yet, though we know not whence it comes, though we often do know it to be extremely ignorant and dangerous, there is for every one of us a public opinion, a belief, or, at any rate, a make-believe of the majority, which it would be fatal to all our hopes of worldly success to disregard. At the same time, to

regard it, to sacrifice anything to it better than a mere whim or caprice, is almost as dishonest as it is cowardly. Men, we are told, or, at any rate, clergymen, may believe what they like, but they must not speak what they like. The articles and formularies to which they have subscribed declare not necessarily what is true, but what, at any rate, they are to affect to believe true, and by no means to contradict. The clergy, we are now taught, are not "a body of earnest men commissioned to improve the faith and practice of mankind, but only a hierarchy of functionaries." "If we are to have an establishment," says the leading journal of London,* "we must establish something; somewhere the limit must be drawn of what opinions are or are not to receive the support of the State. Mere opinion is and, we trust, will always remain free in this country; but clergymen must teach nothing contrary to the engagements into which they have entered. A clergyman may doubt of things which the framers of the Articles assumed to be too self-evident to require to be stated. He may hold doctrines susceptible of inferences subversive of recognized opinions. He may get entangled in the meshes of modern criticism, and doubt the genuineness of whole passages of what are usually accepted as sacred writings. He may contend that the books of the Old or New Testament are written by other persons than those whose names they bear, etc. But he must not teach or publish anything at variance with the formularies which he is bound to believe." What hope can there be of a bold, strong, honest public opinion in religious matters, when the very guides and leaders of the

* *The Times.*

people are placed in a position than which it would be impossible for the cruelty and ingenuity of their worst enemies to devise one more contemptible? Biblical criticism, carrying not a few of the clergy along with it, has come at last into collision with public opinion. Public opinion demands that the hierarchy shall not yield even an inch of sacred territory, a single letter or dot of Holy Scripture, to the rationalist invader. This mighty and irresponsible tyrant, this stern, unreasoning will of the majority, must needs be propitiated; and not a single "safeguard of our holy religion," not a single oath or subscription, must be relaxed or removed until, at any rate, the many-headed monster has been lulled to sleep again. Then, when all educated laymen have wholly ceased to care what the clergy may utter on any religious subject whatever, they may perhaps receive from the universal scorn of mankind "the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely." Surely, in presence of the possibility of a fate so ignominious, it is well to listen to the counsel which David gave to Solomon, "Be thou strong, and show thyself a man."

But the fetters by which the laws may bind the clergy of an established Church are not more real, they are only more conspicuous, than those fetters by which almost every section of the religious world is seeking to bind the free spirit. "Think as the majority thinks," religious bigotry says, "or go your way lonely and suspected; remember that people care comparatively little about the truth; they have made up their minds long ago what they mean to take for truth; it is that, and nothing else whatever, that they wish to have taught." Around that august sham have

gathered all manner of political establishments, vested interests, pecuniary profits, and windy reputations. In comparison with these, nay, even in comparison with the salary of a common beadle, what are the theories of solitary students, or the visions of holy seers, or the utterances of inspired prophets? Every new truth, every new form of an old truth, every kind of reformation, introduces into that which needed to be reformed some sort of confusion. Why not let well alone? When things are at rest, be careful not to move them! You are sure to make some enemies—you are very likely not to make a single friend; and, moreover, if you will insist on annoying people with your novelties who are quite content with things as they are, you must do it at your peril.

Who is not aware that in the face of the tyranny of the many, the individual is all but helpless and exceedingly weak? And this weakness manifests itself by no means always in dishonesty, but far oftener in a withdrawing of the attention and thought from those subjects where difficulties abound. It is only too easy to forget theology or ethics in business or pleasure; yet business and pleasure can never exhaust the powers of a human spirit or satisfy its longings. In spite of all our efforts to keep them away, the thoughts of God and duty will sometimes intrude; and even the things that are seen and temporal will sometimes suggest those better things that are not seen and eternal. At such times weakness grows ashamed of itself and wretched; and even cowardice begins to perceive that if it had not been dim-sighted, it would long ago have known that there is no terrible misery more utterly to be feared than that which tortures the man who has dared to be a coward.

There is, at any rate, then, good cause why we should lay to heart this counsel that David gave his son, "Be thou strong, and show thyself a man." Viewed in the light that has been shining upon it more and more brightly through many centuries, how comprehensive has the meaning of the words "Show thyself *a man*" become! For *He* has been born into the world who came forth wearing a crown of thorns, and of whom Pilate said, "Behold the man!" The old Jewish economy has passed away, and we know now that it is better to be a child of God than a child of Abraham, better to be a man than a Jew. Feudal distinctions have for the most part gone the way of all the earth; aristocracy itself begins to acknowledge that it must *deserve* its high position, and he who has worth sees stretching fair before him the road to honour. Nay, even ecclesiastical exclusiveness has had to yield to the ever-growing reverence for humanity which is inseparable from Christ's religion, and the priest retains his authority only on condition that he shall have *compassion on those that are ignorant and out of the way*. Theology, politics, trade, science—these, or all of them put together, cannot exhaust the faculties or the resources of human nature; and to be a perfect *man* is nobler and greater than to be any mere *kind of man* whatever.

Yet though we may have well learned this lesson, we very frequently forget it, and there still are wars and rivalries of classes which cannot but be equally fatal to victors and vanquished. If in the older nations of Europe the nobility could be persuaded to forget their relation to the commons; if they could be brought to believe that they might be more selfish or less just

than their neighbours; if they were to forget that it was for helping and not hindering the commonwealth that their ancestors had been ennobled, they would assuredly become more worthless, more utterly corrupt, than the very meanest of those whom they would have learned to despise. And if the commons could fling away all reverence for the illustrious dead, if they were to succeed in cutting off the present from the past, and could really persuade children that it was not of the smallest consequence who their fathers were, they would by the very same stroke cut off the future from the present, and destroy the sources of permanent national strength and glory. For the generation of men that should neither look before nor after would have sunk to the level of the beasts that perish. How often have demagogues, and political and social adventurers, in these few last years, harangued the working classes upon the rights of labour and the tyranny of capital! They have reminded them that by the sweat of *their* brows, not themselves only, but their employers have been gaining their bread. They have told them that they, sunk as they were too often in extreme poverty, were the source of all the wealth of the country. They have urged them to demand a far larger share of that wealth, to make their own terms with their masters, and to compel their fellow-labourers also to submit to the same conditions. "Be men!" these perorating demagogues have exclaimed; "let no greedy capitalist put his foot upon your necks, or wring from you those heaps of treasure which he displays so proudly to his own glorification and your disgrace." From this one-sided counsel, this mean interpretation of the needs and capacities of manhood, have come

again and again, for the labourers, strikes and famine, and for the employers of labour, bankruptcy. The tree that bears such fruit can scarcely be a good tree. Be men, the most sober-minded counsellors would say to the working classes, and therefore be not the mere slaves of impulse and blind, ignorant passion. Don't imagine that the distribution of wealth is quite so simple a matter as the orators of trades-unions would have you suppose. Recollect that for a rapid production (rapid enough to keep pace with the necessities of the labouring class) abstinence is as necessary as labour; and that it is this abstinence which produces capital, and capital which keeps labourers and their families alive until their wages become due. Indeed, to go no further into these details, they are but illustrations of the fact that we are members one of another, and that one cannot become permanently and truly great by the mere littleness of another. Far rather is it true that in the greatness, even the commercial greatness, of *one* all the community are sharers. Happiness can come either to labourers or employers of labour not by any vain endeavour to promote the interests of a class, but by rising above class prejudices, by a thorough human culture, by discovering and obeying those laws to which the wisdom of God has subjected the production and distribution of wealth. No amount of passion, no noisy sophistry, no empty cant of manhood, will ever do the work that must be done before all sorts and conditions of men have the utmost possible enjoyment of the gifts of God.

To take one more example of the need there is to show ourselves men, I may remind you of that principle of asceticism which has prevailed through the

whole history of the Christian Church, and also in vast regions outside Christendom. I say *the principle*, not *the practice* of asceticism. There have been, and easily may be again, times when the practice of asceticism is necessary. It may very safely be affirmed that the survival of the Christian religion is due to those heroic souls that cut themselves wholly off from the world when the world was a mere cesspool of filth and abomination that now we should be ashamed even to describe. But by *the principle* of asceticism I mean the theory that it is, in itself, apart from its moral and spiritual utility, a higher form of Christian life—nay, the only condition of spiritual perfection. In its grosser manifestations, civilization has driven this ascetic principle into holes and corners, and Protestantism especially has, to some extent—and often irrationally—repudiated it. S. Simeon no longer addresses admiring crowds from the top of a tall pillar. S. Thomas himself would scarcely be to-day admitted into his own cathedral, if he were to present himself there as he is described by the brilliant but too prejudiced historian.* Professional mendicancy, however pious, finds small favour with the police magistrate, and voluntary and useless wretchedness is justly considered odious. Yet it may be feared that, just possibly, even in our modern fraternities and sisterhoods, we may have, unless we are exceedingly watchful, too much of the principle instead of the sacred utility of asceticism. Puritanism, too, on its practical side, is but another—and a far more uninviting and even revolting—form of the same principle; and the religious world still seeks to honour God by despising or destroying or refusing to use

* Froude.

the gifts and blessings which God bestows upon them. That mystic glory that once encircled like a halo the brows of the priesthood has, indeed, faded away. But ministers of religion are still expected to be much better than their neighbours are *required* to be; and their superior goodness is to manifest itself largely by abstinence from those enjoyments which are forbidden to none but themselves. Thus, the mere negative side of religion is put above the positive; those means which are useful only for securing the highest spiritual ends are exalted above the ends themselves. Self-denial is counted a higher virtue than fellowship with God, and to sacrifice is deemed better than to obey. For it is surely disobedience to fling back God's gifts to Him unused; to allow ourselves no rest from the heavy burdens of a weary life; to shut our eyes to the beauties of Nature, and the triumphs of science and art; to look with cold disdain upon the ordinary occupations of our neighbours, and to empty our own of that piety and divineness without which they must become desecrated and evil. "Show yourself then a man"; do not bring to God in your own imperfectly-developed nature, and your own joyless experience, the halt, the maimed, and the blind for sacrifice. Do not presume to take up a cross which was never meant for you, nor think so boastfully of your own strength as to fancy that you can carry a far heavier burden than life itself will most surely lay upon you. Bring to God the mirth of childhood, the strength of youth, the firm purpose and wise counsels of mature life, the ripe experience and quiet serenity of old age. Honour God in the summer's sunshine, and not only in the bleak storms of winter. "Praise Him with the timbrel and

dance, praise Him with all stringed instruments and organs." In sport and work, in solitude and society, "show yourself a man."

Again, though departing somewhat further even than I have already done from the original meaning of the words of the text, I may remind you that it has become more than ever necessary that you should in some practical way *show* yourselves men, and not take it for granted that people will believe that a tree is good whether it happens to bear fruit or not. There have been times when the status gave dignity to the man—now the man must give dignity to his status. That you have had higher advantages than your neighbours, will not be accepted as a complete demonstration that you have made a good use of them; moreover, education seems too often to be regarded by the lower portion of the middle class only as a necessary evil; while by the actually working class it is regarded more and more as a sure road to advancement, the way by which they may arrive both at wealth and a higher social position. By the one it is regarded as somewhat expensively ornamental, by the other as sternly and unbeautifully useful. If these different estimates of its worth should last long, the education of the two classes will change places, and those from whom most might fairly be expected will really possess least. In a similar manner, the education of women may quite easily become superior to the average education of men; for women are claiming culture as a right long unjustly withheld from them; their enjoyment of it is a comparatively new and therefore most delicious experience. They seek for it with all the ardour of a fresh pursuit. A boy has generally so many more

educational advantages than a girl, that he ought to be very far her superior; but if a boy be idle, and a girl industrious, the boy's higher advantages are thrown away. In short, the question that will be asked of you is not this: What have you had the opportunity of learning?—but this: What do you actually know? You will not be asked, What would you have been able now to do if you had made the use you ought to have made of all your advantages? but you will be asked, What can you actually do? A merchant must have his business done to-day. Law, medicine, the army and navy, and, we may surely also say, the Church, require actual ability of the proper kind, and not dim recollections of what once was possible, and vain regrets that it is possible no longer. Show yourselves men, then, not by blowing your own trumpets on all occasions, nor by requiring those about you to take it for granted that you necessarily are what you ought to be; but by stepping at once into the place where you are needed, and doing in a workmanlike way whatever work of hand or brain needs to be done. And what (may I venture to request you to ask yourselves?) do you really know? what can you thoroughly well do? what single subject is there in which you feel perfectly at home? Is even your daily business more to you than a routine of weary details? Do you understand the *principles* upon which its success depends? And when your day's work is over, when you have ceased for a while to be the shopkeeper, the clerk, the merchant, the lawyer—when, in a word, you have simply to come back to your own manhood—what do you find there? Have you no better way of spending your evenings than in utterly empty conversation and mere vanity?

What kind of books can you read with thorough enjoyment? What region of Nature is there that you visit with the real pleasure of an intimate friend? What plants or animals do you care for? In what department of science or art do you feel yourself at home? Poetry, history, philosophy—are these able to charm away your weariness, and to refresh your spirit, and through that your body also, for another day's toil? Alas! you know far too well in how terribly different a manner it is possible and easy for young men to waste their leisure and throw away themselves.

Of what remains, I can offer only suggestions and a bare outline. Man has the knowledge of *right* and *wrong*. I need not stop to inquire whence this knowledge comes. Were we to accept the very lowest hypothesis, we might be almost content to admit that it may have been suggested to him by experiences that even the brutes themselves are not entirely without; by pleasure and pain, utility and mischief. Still, however suggested, it is of its own kind. Right is more than usefulness, even though usefulness may be its invariable sign. Even utilitarianism itself, in the hands of its latest and most accomplished expositor, Mr. J. S. Mill, acquires a beauty, and grandeur, and comprehensiveness which conceal what, in the judgment of many thinkers, must forever remain its incurable defects. But, at any rate, to do right, however we may find out what right is, is manly, and to do wrong is unmanly. We have a higher nature than the beasts, by which it is possible for us to do the things contained in God's law, and the unrighteous man is neglecting the noblest part of his true humanity.

Again, we must show ourselves men by gentleness and charity, by sincere affection, by bearing one another's burdens, by forbearing and forgiving one another if any man have a quarrel against any. Love, with all its fitting manifestations, is not effeminate, nor is it any sign of manliness to be cold-hearted. That pernicious theory of the difference of the two sexes which would make women foolishly fond and men wisely cold, is surely going the way of all the earth; for men and women alike are to follow as dear children that All-wise God who is Love, the Maker, and Ruler, and Father of the spirits of all flesh.

And last, though not least, it is the highest glory of man, it is his *eternal life*, to know the very God; to obey Him, not by a blind instinct, but with the cheerfulness of knowledge and sympathy. It is surely unmanly to admire all beauty but that which is the very fountain, the very model and archetype, of all beauty; to rejoice in the order of the universe and find no pleasure in the contemplation of Him from whose wisdom and goodness all order comes; to recognize the ties of kindred and the bonds of affection, and to have no eye to perceive that infinite, all-embracing Love of which earthly love is but the image and copy. And if religion itself is on the speculative side the highest philosophy, and on the practical side the perfection of virtue, the advice of David to his son may well proceed from manliness to piety—"Be thou strong, and show thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies." "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." "God understandeth the way thereof, and

He knoweth the place thereof: for He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds; and He weigheth the waters by measure. When He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder, then He did see it and declare it; He prepared it, yea, and searched it out. And *unto man* He said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding."

It is unmanly to be without religion, to live godless lives; but we must not forget that a false religion, or a dwarfed religion, may do more than all other things put together to destroy our manliness, and especially to make us cowards. The fear of hell, and the spirit of bondage instead of the spirit of adoption, have again and again broken every tie by which men are bound to one another. They have destroyed loyalty and patriotism; they have divorced husbands and wives, they have set at variance parents and children, they have severed friends; they have hindered commerce and forbidden science, and stifled the utterance of honest thought; they have made men afraid, even to examine that which without examination can neither be honoured nor admired. Men have been taught to lie for God, and to do evil that good might come. Even in our own day there are forms of religion which are the implacable foes of knowledge, criticism and progress. "Show yourselves then men" in every department of your religious life. Do not be afraid if it should be necessary, to examine the foundations of your faith. Do not shrink from those inquiries the object of which is to find truth, however long and painful the search may be. Do not be afraid to confess what

you really believe, or to deny what you disbelieve. Be sure that you have by no means yet reached that perfect knowledge for which the human spirit longs, and with which God has promised to satisfy it. Every age has altered—at least by legitimate development—the creed of the age which went before it. There are no two men living who in every respect know alike, believe alike, and express themselves alike. Be sure that you must be indeed foolish if you do not know more than you did a year ago, or a quarter of a century ago; and do not attempt to put the new wine of your enlarged experience into old bottles. Sects and parties, with their bitter clamour, may seek to frighten you from that path where the light shines more and more unto the perfect day. Even in this nineteenth century you may find men who think they would do God service by calling down fire from heaven upon all who differ from themselves. “Be thou therefore strong, and show thyself a man”—a man in virtue and godliness, in truth and courage and charity.

But I must add one last word. The object of seeking is *to find*; and, when we have *found*, the *seeking* is over. Surely the chief duty of man is not to be ever inquiring, but to discover, to believe, to act. The greatest proof of your strength will be to adhere to the right; to resist the everlasting restlessness which characterizes our age; “to *stand*,” as S. Paul says, “*and having done all, to stand.*”

ABSOLUTION.*

Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you : as the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them : whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.—S. JOHN XX. 21-23.†

It is one of the very many advantages of a definite order in the conduct of the divine service—including a fixed and invariable series of Scripture-readings—that it compels both clergy and laity to give some careful consideration to those very passages of Holy Scripture which, for reasons good or bad, they might be inclined to overlook or to avoid. The reasons are too often exceedingly bad. They are intellectual idleness or cowardice, the dread of being compelled to come to some conclusion on questions which we wish to keep “open,” the fear of offending those whose kind

* Preached on the first Sunday after Easter, 1883. This sermon, as printed, is less rhetorical and, I hope, more complete and careful than the sermon I preached—though substantially the same.

† εἶπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς [ὁ Ἰησοῦς] παλιν Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν • καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, κἀγὼ πέμπω ὑμᾶς. καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς Λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον • ἂν τινῶν ἀφήτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφεῶνται αὐτοῖς • ἂν τινῶν κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται. The reading ἀφεῶνται is, I think, the true reading—but it is not absolutely certain. It may have arisen from a wish to adapt it to the perfect κεκράτηνται. The reading ἀφίενται gives an excellent meaning, and nothing of doctrinal importance is involved in the choice between the two. For MS. authority, see Tischendorf (Ed. viii^a *Crit. Major*).

feeling and hearty co-operation we may believe to be essential not only to our comfort, but to our ministerial success. But the reasons are often very good. They are the fear of presuming to go beyond our authority, of seeming to close questions which really *are* "open," of distressing good people with doubts and troubles which would never otherwise have occurred to them. We have no right to insist upon compelling other people to journey with us over the arid desert of our own mere inquiries, to say nothing of our uncertainties and misgivings. Practical religion is possible, thank God, for very ignorant people, and "invincible ignorance" is not a "mortal sin." It is a very rash and dangerous experiment to try to improve the religion of very ignorant people, unless we are absolutely certain that after we have destroyed the religion they have we can not only provide them with, but persuade them to accept, what is for them a better.

But the passage I have just read to you cannot possibly be regarded with indifference. These words are the words of our Saviour Christ. *That* is their chief significance. But it is a matter of no small importance that they are included in our own Ordinal; they were addressed *to me* at that solemn moment when I was ordained a priest in Christ's Holy Church. It is surely worth asking whether they mean something or nothing; and, if they mean something, what that something is. This is a question as important for you as for me. Have I, or have I not, authority to minister to you these divine consolations and awful warnings? May I preach, not only to a promiscuous congregation, but *to each of you personally*, that—on the assumption of your true contrition and all which that implies—

you personally are forgiven? Have I power to say to you—on certain conditions—your sins are “*retained*”; you are not sincere; and you must *invert* yourselves, begin life anew and on wholly different lines, or there is nothing for you but *death*?

And here it may be well to relieve your minds of expectations or fears which the very text itself may have suggested to you. But what a condition we are in when the mere repetition of Christ’s words almost frightens us! You cannot hear them without inwardly asking, “Oh! *what now?* Is the preacher going to recommend ‘auricular confession’; to tell us that unless we come and tell all our wretched history, our sins and remorse and shame, to *him*, God will never forgive us? Those words he has just read cannot mean that. If they do — But they do *not*. Perhaps they mean nothing, or nothing important. Surely he will be prudent.” I hope you are prepared to take it for granted of every clergyman that if he were convinced that any doctrine whatever were undoubtedly true, and of great practical importance, his only possible “prudence” would be to force it upon your acceptance by all the power which God may have given him. Your minister cannot possibly be “*your* servant for Jesus’ sake” unless he “preaches Christ Jesus *as Lord*.” Loyalty to *Him* is at the foundation of all loyalty to *you*. And, for my own part, if I came to believe the Tridentine doctrine of “the Sacrament of Penance,” I might be betrayed by cowardice or self-interest, but I should have *no moral alternative* but to accept and proclaim it with all its consequences.

But my object this morning is not to encourage in our own Church—nor in this parish, over which alone

I have any kind of jurisdiction—the practice of Auricular Confession; but to expound, as far as I can, a passage of Scripture. I may say, however, that if I believed the Tridentine doctrine of “the Sacrament of Penance,” I should still find very grave—indeed, in my judgment, fatal and insuperable—objections to the revival of a general practice of Auricular Confession in our own Church, under our present circumstances. Whatever else the Church of Rome may be, she is a standing example of what seems to me an almost superhuman sagacity. It is not for nothing that she has been mistress of Christendom for so many centuries; or that she has inherited the organizing and administrative capacity of the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire. She has known, again and again, the bitterness of persecution. She has put her foot on the necks of the rulers of the world. She has not only survived, but conquered, Roman civilization. She has withstood and directed the inrush of barbarous hordes, and presided at the birth, and controlled the education, of nascent, vigorous nations. She has passed through the throes of the Reformation, and deeply pondered the objections of Reformers to her doctrine, her ritual and her discipline. She has gathered her experience from all sorts and conditions of men, from all races, from all forms of government. If sometimes we almost hate her, we cannot help feeling that we are yet more sure that we love her. We have affinities with narrow sects, with wild liberalism and “unchartered freedom”; but, if we were compelled to choose between them, the home, the resting-place of our spirits, would be found, in the end, to be far more with her than with them. At any rate, she knows human nature, and she knows “the Sacrament of Penance.”

She knows that auricular confession, though she believes it to be “generally” necessary to salvation, is also encompassed by very serious dangers. There are dangers arising out of the possible inexperience of the confessor, or his want of method. There are moral and spiritual dangers arising out of the mutual relations of confessor and penitent—out of the sometimes awful suggestiveness of what one may say and the other be bound to hear. There are dangers of scandal, arising out of secrecy and close intimacy. Neither the Roman nor any other Church can command perfect instruments for the doing of her work; but the Roman Church has taken the utmost possible precautions against every one of the dangers of which I have just spoken. I quote from the article on “The Sacrament of Penance” in the *Catholic Dictionary*,* a paragraph which very many

* This dictionary, published by the *New York Catholic Publication Society*, is so far authoritative that it may certainly be accepted by Protestants as approximately accurate as a standard of Roman doctrine. It is remarkably fair and learned. See also the following Rubrics from the *Rituale Romanum (Ordo Ministrandi Sacramentum Pœnitentiæ)*: “In Ecclesia, non autem in privatis œdibus, Confessiones [Sacerdos] audiat, nisi ex causa rationabili, quæ cum inciderit, studeat tamen id decenti ac *patenti* loco præstare. Habeat in Ecclesia sedem confessionalem, in qua sacras Confessiones excipiat, quæ sedes *patenti, conspicuo, et apto* Ecclesiæ loco posita, *crate perforata inter pœnitentem et Sacerdotem sit instructa*. . . . Sed caveat [Sacerdos], ne curiosis aut inutilibus interrogationibus quemquam detineat, præsertim juniores utriusque sexus, vel alios de eo quod ignorant, imprudenter interrogans, ne scandalum patiantur, indeque peccare discant.” Protestants often forget that *when confession is compulsory*, the priest is likely to be tempted far oftener by the weariness of routine than by the excitement of romance.

of our very "high" Churchmen would do well to ponder.

There is little in the laborious work of the confessional to satisfy curiosity, for the priest learns nothing except the number and species of sins committed, and he is bound under the most sacred obligations to abstain from all unnecessary questions, particularly from all such as might convey knowledge of sins previously unknown to the penitent. He has to decide according to the principles of an elaborate casuistry which he has studied for years, and in which he has been examined by his superiors, before he enters the confessional. There is little room for tyranny on his part, for the faithful know well that they may have recourse to any approved confessor. Here, as elsewhere, holy things may be profaned. But the Church deprives a priest of the power to absolve an accomplice, rigorously punishing any attempt to do so; and were a priest so miserable as to abuse the confessional for bad ends, then the person to whom he had spoken wrongly could not be absolved, even by another priest, till he or she had communicated the name of the criminous clerk to the Bishop of the Diocese. Such cases are necessarily of very rare occurrence, for sin of this kind would involve almost inevitable ruin to the priest. Of all pastoral ministrations we firmly believe there is none which involves a more self-denying devotion to a monotonous duty, none where the good effects are so plain and visible, and very few which are more seldom marred by human weakness and sin.

Now, the insuperable and fatal objection to the revival of the practice of Auricular Confession, in our own Church and in existing circumstances, is this: that it is accompanied by *not one* of the absolutely necessary *safeguards* provided by the Church of Rome. On no theory, except the extremest Low-Church theory, can a priest be justified, in ordinary cases, in hearing confessions and administering Sacramental absolution unless he has received, from a competent authority, *jurisdiction* for that

purpose. *Power*—inherent power—is given him by his ordination; but the right to exercise that power *in some particular place, and over some particular people, is not* given him by ordination. The *consensus* of opinion, and of authoritative decisions, on this point is so complete that it would be idle to give separate references. The only person who can give a priest *jurisdiction* in this matter is, in our Church, his Bishop—the Ordinary of the diocese. Some of the priests who habitually hear confessions in our Church may indeed have received this authority, but I do not believe that very many of them have; and in many of our dioceses it is morally certain that they have not; it is morally certain that they are acting in known opposition to the Bishop from whom all their powers are, at least on their own theory, derived. Nor have they been instructed in “casuistry”—that is to say, in a methodical and harmonious way of dealing with the innumerable cases of conscience which may come before them. Nor—I am inclined to say, above all—are they protected in hearing confessions by “the armour of light,” by perfect publicity. They know that their practice, rightly or wrongly, is regarded with suspicion. They dare not put up a “confessional” in their churches.* They hear confessions in vestries, or in their own houses. They are at the mercy of any lewd woman who may choose to “blackmail” them. They are, thus far, out of all harmony with Catholic usage and with common

* In some very few churches where confessions have been very frequent, “confessionals” have been put up, and *have been removed*—I presume, in the absence of legal authority, by the persuasion—at any rate, by the influence of *the Bishop of the Diocese*.

prudence. This—and not anything doctrinal, or in addition to anything doctrinal—is the objection which many consider insuperable to the revival in our own Church, and in existing circumstances, of the general practice of Auricular Confession.

In reply it may be argued plausibly—and, to many minds, conclusively—that the Reformation was exceedingly imperfect and inconsistent. Great changes were made without any careful consideration of the effects of those changes upon the general balance and proportion of what was intended to be left unaltered. The intention of Henry VIII.—so far as it was theological or ecclesiastical, and apart from his too manifest determination to enrich himself and his new nobility by a wholesale confiscation of the property of the Church—was to put himself in the place of the Roman Pontiff. But he did not realize that the reverence of the English people for a very popular king was exceedingly different, both in kind and in degree, from the reverence of English Churchmen for a Pope. He did not realize the impossibility of uniting these feelings into one, and centring them upon a single individual. He did not remember how much was involved in the fact that he himself was not even a priest, much less a patriarch; and that the crown of England might descend upon a woman. He did not accurately estimate what was involved in the fact that, though he for the most part scrupulously adhered to legal forms, all the acts of his Bishops and convocations were rendered morally, canonically, religiously worthless by the coercion to which he habitually subjected them. He altered what he wished to have altered with the forced “consent” of those without whose consent the changes would

have been impossible; he did not trouble himself about the effect of putting a new patch into an old garment, or new wine into old skins. He was succeeded by Edward VI., or, more accurately, by a set of unprincipled statesmen who were, perhaps, the most worthless rulers that England had ever known. Then came the reaction. If Mary had not been infatuated by Philip and enslaved by Spain; if she had been under the guidance of such statesmen as Sir Thomas More, to whom her father had given a martyr's crown; the Reformation would have been reversed, and a joyous nation would have gone back to their old religion, "received their Maker" at their old altars, and contrived to unite national liberty with Catholic Unity. Elizabeth had to govern a nation exasperated by national humiliation and domestic suffering and Spanish cruelty; she had to deal with Protestantism in a rage; she was also determined to assert her own Tudor individuality; and so the course of the Reformation was yet further deflected. In fact, it never had either a definite starting-point or a definite goal. In this religious and ecclesiastical chaos people lived "from hand to mouth." All kinds of "jurisdictions" might have lapsed or emerged. As a matter of fact, the general practice of Auricular Confession had been made optional, and had been largely discouraged. Later on—down to the accession of William III.—it had been becoming all but entirely extinct. It would have been scarcely worth while to invest men with a "jurisdiction" to which nobody would submit, or elaborately train them for a service which nobody would require. If our modern "confessors," it may be argued, have neither training nor "jurisdiction,"

this is a mere accident. Circumstances now have changed. What nobody wanted fifty years ago, thousands of people want to-day. If we have no "jurisdiction," we have, at any rate, the "power" to give them what they want; and the very fact that no "jurisdiction" is asked or provided for, implies that the exercise of our "power" is left to our own discretion.

But the very fact that "circumstances have changed" invalidates the conclusion which it is intended to prove. The very fact—if it be a fact—that thousands of people are crowding to the confessional, not under a legal, but under a moral compulsion, renders the old restrictions, for the old reasons, absolutely necessary. Even the youngest parish priest will be required sometimes to give advice, however limited his experience. A priest who has been in charge of a parish for thirty or forty years must have heard confessions—by whatever name he chooses to call them—hundreds of times over. But to sit in some one definite "tribunal" of divine justice without express authority; to pronounce sentence, whether of condemnation or acquittal, without a definite procedure—that is to say without a thorough knowledge of "casuistry"—is simply absurd. If *nobody* wants to confess, there is no need either for jurisdiction or protection against danger and scandal; if *everybody* wants to confess, both these are absolutely indispensable.

I have made these remarks not because I should be in the least degree afraid of recommending to you habitual auricular confession, if I thought it right; or of discouraging it, if I thought it undesirable; but because I think you ought to be reminded that what seems very simple to untrained minds is often, in the highest degree, complex and uncertain. Religious

people, in our day, get into the habit of putting, especially to the clergy, *test questions*, to which they think they may reasonably expect a definite answer—"yes" or "no." They forget that there are many logical contraries which are not contradictories. They forget that the very terms of the question, which seem to them so unmistakable, are in reality entirely ambiguous. They forget that what may be right for one man may be wrong for another; what may be right in highly exceptional cases may be wrong as a general rule; what may be right with certain safeguards may be wrong, and even absurd and fatal, without them. They forget that, in theological and ecclesiastical arguments, strict justice, rigid impartiality, and Christian charity, are of even greater importance than the rules of the syllogism. And, after all, both our judgment and our conduct in relation—if I may express it in technical terms—to "the Sacrament of Penance," will depend upon the meaning we assign to those words of our Blessed Lord which I have taken for this morning's text. If we believe that, by His authority, a priest has some special power to remit our sins, we shall go to him for absolution; and we shall leave *him* to settle the question of his "jurisdiction" with his ecclesiastical superiors. If we think the "jurisdiction" as necessary as the power, we shall find some priest who has both. If we think that we are as well off without a priest's absolution as with it, we shall unquestionably let him alone.

It may be observed, to begin with, that our Lord's words were addressed neither to all the Apostles nor to the Apostles alone. S. Thomas was unquestionably absent. The little company, assembled in the room

where "the doors were shut for fear of the Jews," probably included some women, and almost certainly the disciples from Emmaus. They are spoken of not as apostles, but as "disciples." It might seem, therefore, that the power to remit and retain sins, whatever that power may have been, was given not simply to the Apostles and their successors or delegates, but *to the whole Church*, both men and women, represented in that little gathering. And this, on one side, is in entire accord with the penitential discipline of the Church for several centuries.* The early penitents confessed their sins to the whole congregation. They lay outside the church, grovelling in sackcloth and filth and squalor, weeping and wailing, beseeching all who entered to intercede for their forgiveness. It may be said, indeed, that the absolution they desired was the remission of ecclesiastical censures, and restoration to the communion of the faithful—and especially permission to receive again the Holy Eucharist. But this must have involved a judicial, or *quasi-judicial*, decision that they were also released from the sins which had caused their exclusion. That absolution is the gift of *the Church* is explicitly affirmed in the form of absolution in the Anglican *Office for the Visitation of the Sick*: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to *His Church* to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offenses: and by His authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

* See the very learned article on "Penitence" in Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, not forgetting, as far as possible, to consult the references.

But, however this may have been,* the fact that the power of absolution was given to the Church is by no means exclusive or contradictory of the fact that it was to be exercised—and ought to be exercised—only by *the authorized representatives* of the Church, who are also, in a special sense, “the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.” It is an invariable characteristic of a high organism that its various parts are adapted for special purposes and special services which no other parts of the organism can perform. There are, I believe, living beings of so simple and rudimentary a structure that they may be turned inside out without discomfort. They may be dimly sensitive to the varying intensity of light, but they have no eye. They may have vague and indefinable feelings, but they have no special organs of sensation. They assimilate food, but they have no alimentary system, and are, so to speak, all stomach. These, however, are not the highest, but the lowest, in the scale of life. The moment, by special creative power or by long evolution, a living creature becomes possessed of a true *eye*, it must see by means of its eye, and not otherwise. This is not a loss, but a gain; and it does not cease to be true that the vision which the eye seems to be monopolizing is not for the eye itself, but for the living creature to which the eye belongs. And this is equally, or even more conspicuously, true of those highly complex organisms which we call society, the nation, the Church. It is beyond all question that

* It seems plain that Christ was especially addressing *the Apostles* when he said, “As the Father hath sent Me even so send I you.” These words can scarcely have been addressed to the holy women, nor even to the disciples from Emmaus.

Christ Himself appointed apostles, with special powers of teaching and administration. But if this had been otherwise, the very nature of a Church—or of any society of human beings—would have produced a “division of labour,” rulers, teachers, “committees,” presidents, analogous to those which Christ Himself appointed. It may be true that, in the sight of God, all Christian men and women are equal; it is much more likely to be true that they are equivalent. Most certainly they are not identical. “Now ye are the body of Christ,” says S. Paul,* “and severally members thereof. And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?” S. Paul leaves these questions unanswered, because they answer themselves. The very force of his argument is this—it is an appeal to everybody’s experience. The quick-witted, factious Corinthians could not tolerate *order*; they could barely tolerate *decency*. Women were to be as free in their behaviour as men; and not only in their dress to defy the ordinary rules of decorum, but even to “speak in the churches.” Each member of the Church wanted to be exactly what every other was. They interrupted each other in the Church assemblies. And S. Paul reminds them that this kind of behaviour was *absurd*. The Church was not a chaos: it was intended to be the realization of an ideal order. It was the truest and

* I. Corinthians xii. 27–30. It is impossible to read this whole chapter too often or too carefully.

noblest body, even the Body of Christ, and, therefore, was the most perfectly organized of all bodies. And a perfect body includes a minute "differentiation" of its separate parts.

The power of "remitting and retaining" sins, then, even though given to the whole Church as Christ's Body, as commissioned to preserve and propagate His revelation and to execute His will, must certainly be *exercised*—whether by His *direct* appointment (as I believe), or by His *indirect* appointment through inevitable "evolution"—by *special individuals* set apart for that purpose. Moreover, speaking generally, it must be exercised by *these only*. For its exercise depends upon those gifts of the Spirit which, now as in the beginning, are given "to each one" for his special work; and upon the authority both of Christ and of His Church, which authority is not entrusted promiscuously to every man, woman and child in the Christian society. Those who believe that the power of "remitting and retaining sins," whatever that power may be, belongs to the whole Church, should be the very first to maintain that no private individual has the right to exercise it without an authorized delegation of that power by the Church itself, or by its recognized officers.

In fact, we all admit this principle, and apply it in detail to practice, in every instance in which our judgment is not deflected by prejudice or fear. There are a few persons—an infinitesimal fraction of the whole mass of Christendom—who set the very principle at defiance. But we do not seriously argue with such people: we regard them with wonder, and pity, and even amusement. Nobody would seriously argue with

a man who seemed really to believe that he could see with his foot or walk with his eye. But the thing to be observed is that all people of this odd way of thinking do, and necessarily must, retire from the Church; not from the Protestant Episcopal, or the Roman, or the Eastern Church, but from every existing or any possible Church. Their denial of this principle—viz.: that a body is made up of “members in particular”—is the annihilation of a Church, the repudiation of its very idea. They may retain certain parts of the Christian creed—which, however, being severed from the rest, are for the most part distorted or exaggerated into falsehood. They may be “very well-meaning people.” In spite of the enormous conceit and portentous egotism of assuming that they are infallibly right in respect of opinions and practices which the overwhelming majority of Christians regard as little short of insanity, and which were never heard of for at least seventeen hundred years, they may have a kind of misguided humility. But they cannot possibly constitute a Church, or a body, or a society. For all these terms connote rules, organization, officers, definite modes of conducting business, a clear purpose, and an ascertained belief. They are no more a Church than is an evening “reception.” If in our dread of priestcraft, or with a far nobler jealousy for the honour of Him who alone can truly, originally, independently “forgive sins”—if, for these or any other reasons, we hesitate to admit that “remitting and retaining” sins, authoritatively and officially, has been entrusted exclusively to one class of persons, we should remember that the same objection is equally valid not only against the ordination of preachers and rulers, but against the

supposed rights and duties and capacities of *the whole Church as a body*. If Christ be the only Absolver—as, in the primary and highest sense, He undoubtedly is—He is also the only Teacher and the only Ruler. If it be a usurpation of His incommunicable authority that a single priest should absolve, it is an equal usurpation if a single doctor teaches; it is an equal usurpation if we put our stolen authority “in commission,” and exercise it, not by one person, but by a committee, or a synod, or an Œcumenical Council.

Whatever, then, the power of “remitting and retaining” sins may be, it is a power which may well be entrusted—which, either by the direct or indirect authority of Christ, actually was entrusted—to a special class of persons—viz.: the Apostles. And as the Church was to last forever, it was to be handed down by the Apostles to their successors or their delegates, or those who, by the authority of the Church, should be set apart for the exercise of that power. For this succession and delegation of authority was simply necessary, unless the Church itself were to die with the last of the Apostles.

It seems to me, then, that the words of Christ, in the passage we are considering, were addressed to a little company of disciples representing the whole Church; but especially, and to a certain important extent exclusively, to the Apostles, representing the appointed ministers of the Church to whom the necessary power and jurisdiction should be given through all time. “He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” In this manner He imparted to them the inward, spiritual qualification for the exercise of the authority with

which He was immediately about to invest them. Evidently, therefore, the "remitting" or "retaining" of sins would *require* some special spiritual discernment. And surely this implies that these powers, with the corresponding obligations, were not simply powers, delegated by the Church, of removing or retaining merely ecclesiastical censures and penalties. For this purpose a knowledge of the rules of penitential discipline, satisfactory evidence that an appointed penance had been duly performed, would be abundantly sufficient. Our Lord seems to bestow the Holy Spirit on His Apostles in order that they may be able to see beneath the surface, to unmask hypocrisy, to encourage a genuine but fearful repentance. And, by a parity of reasoning, we may perhaps fairly conclude that this particular gift was not the mere qualification for a public ministry or preaching of the Gospel, or for the administration of Baptism or the Holy Eucharist. Preaching, indeed, requires also a spiritual discernment, but not necessarily a "discernment of spirits." We may preach the Gospel generally without knowing to whom we are preaching it. It may be "the savour of death unto death." Our Gospel may be "hid." But, in dealing with separate individuals and their peculiar spiritual necessities, we must have some knowledge *of them*. The Apostles were to "preach the Gospel to every creature." But they would meet with separate individuals, crushed with the intolerable burden of sin, or living easy lives of self-indulgence or vice, presuming upon a divine mercy which they vainly dreamed they might claim without repentance or faith or love. With these cases *separately* the Apostles would have to deal. "I now give to you," our Lord

seems to say, "that Holy Ghost who will enable you, in every such case, to act wisely and truly. You shall have such clear insight, such entire harmony with the will and truth of God, that you may always act with entire confidence that your acts have the divine approval. All sorts of people will come to you; but, endowed as I have endowed you, guided and governed by My Spirit, '*whosoever* sins ye forgive they are forgiven unto them; *whosoever* sins ye retain, they are retained.'" I shrink from what may be—but surely not in my intention—the profanity of paraphrasing our Lord's words, but it seems to me that they must include at least as much as I have tried to express in these few sentences.

Now, it is certain that there does exist in the world, at this present moment, a Christian Church which claims to be—and historically is—the continuation of that very Church over which the Apostles presided. Its ministers are believed to be—and historically are—the successors of the Apostles and of those whom they delegated and ordained. At the ordination of those of them who are entrusted with the authority to "remit" or "retain" sins, the very words of our Lord—"Receive ye the Holy Ghost"—are addressed to them. Without that gift of the Holy Ghost they can have no spiritual qualifications to execute the powers and duties of the office to which they are appointed. If that gift of the Holy Ghost has been, since the death of S. John, suspended, *there is no longer any authorized and competent ministry of the Church.* The Church expired when S. John died, and the promises of Christ Himself are conspicuously falsified. Our Ordination Service is, on that hypothesis, a farce, a blasphemy, an absurdity.

Is this so, or is it not? Nobody can possibly pretend that the question is unimportant.*

And the question, Does a priest at his ordination "receive the Holy Ghost" for his special "office and work"? is only a particular case of the very much wider question, Does *anybody* "receive the Holy Ghost" *for any purpose whatever*? Does anybody receive the Holy Ghost in Baptism or in Confirmation,

*Of course I am aware that in our own Ordinal—*The Form and Manner of Ordering Priests*—there is an alternative form of ordination introduced by the apparently inoffensive words "*or this*." This alternative, like one or two others in our Prayer Book, may mean everything or nothing. For instance, in another place, the "*or this*" may mean that the Nicene Creed is not really accepted as authoritative or necessary by our Church. In the Ordinal it may be mere chaff to catch very young birds, on the hypothesis that the alternative form means, in words adapted to unthinking and perverse minds, *exactly what is expressed more fully* in the other form. I think, however, that it is intended to convey a *different meaning*. I interpret it thus: "Take thou [though I cannot give thee any reason to be sure of the aid of the Holy Ghost] authority to execute the office [though not to perform the special 'work'] of a priest. . . . And [though thou must not presume to suppose that 'whose sins . . . retained,' yet] bethou," . . . etc. I do not know that a single Bishop in our Church ever uses this alternative—and, I very confidently believe, utterly delusive—form; and I know that very many of the Bishops do not. If any Bishop of our Church really does ordain a priest by that form, and with the meaning I have suggested for it, I believe that *he does not intend to do* what the Church, for many centuries, has intended to do in ordaining priests; and I do not believe that his ordination is valid. At any rate, I am glad to be perfectly certain that my own ordination was not by this alternative and ambiguous form. It may be very true that the shorter form may be in harmony with ancient precedents. But

or at any time whatever? We are constantly affirming, directly or indirectly, that people do receive the Holy Ghost.* But, of course, this may be—and we are continually being told, with sarcastic bitterness, that it is—mere verbiage, a sort of obsolete formula, even a conscious and degrading hypocrisy. On the other hand, religion itself—*any* religion—assumes some direct communion between the Divine Spirit and the spirit of man. Is this true “in general,” and false, or hopelessly doubtful, in every particular instance? Is it true “in the abstract” (whatever that may precisely mean), and false “in the concrete”? Surely, even “priestcraft” would be much better than atheism; and we ought to realize that if there be any intrinsic presumption, or absurdity, or impossibility, in saying at the ordination of a priest, “Receive thou the Holy Ghost,” *all prayer* is absurd, and religion is a dream. No doubt these words themselves are not a prayer; but they are much more significant than if they were. They have been preceded by many prayers: the public prayers of the whole congregation; the solemn, silent prayers of each individual; the *Veni, Creator Spiritus*; and then the Bishop assumes that these prayers have not been ejacula-

it is one thing not to know, and another thing to reject, a particular formula. There were thousands of orthodox Christians before the Council of Nicæa; but it would surely be absurd to call a man “orthodox” who deliberately rejected the Nicene Creed to-day. As to the validity of an ordination by a Bishop not intending what is meant by “Receive thou the Holy Ghost,” and “whose sins,” etc., of course I leave it to learned canonists and casuists: I only express my own private opinion, without for a moment pretending to belong to either of those classes.

* See, for example, the Collect for Whitsunday, and the special prayer “to be said at the meetings of Convention.”

tions into the empty air : that they have been prompted by God Himself, and that He has solemnly pledged Himself to answer them. He assumes that they are answered. He knows that no human being can adequately discharge the duties of the Christian ministry without the real and continual help of the Holy Ghost. He therefore says, in effect: "We have asked, and God according to His most sure promise has given; do not depend upon yourself; do not fear, much less despair, in all your trials and difficulties: the Holy Ghost is given to you; 'receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest.'" If this be senseless, or presumptuous, or superstitious, then all private prayer, all the prayers of the Church, the ministry of the Church, the Sacraments of the Church, the Church itself, seem scarcely better than a mischievous fraud. I cannot accept this alternative; and, apart from that awful dilemma, I believe that every priest at his ordination does receive the needed divine help as really as did the Apostles when Christ "breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

Nor does this imply any infallibility on the part of every or any priest.* The conduct of a priest is a product of many factors, two of which are the guidance of the Holy Ghost and his own free will. It is only too possible that there should be, only too certain that there have been, wicked priests, who have set at naught the promptings of the Holy Ghost and followed "the

* Protestants habitually forget that even the (supposed) infallibility of the Pope does not belong to him personally, but officially. It is rigorously defined. It can only be exercised in a particular way and for a particular purpose; and, as a matter of fact, is not exercised nearly so often (I believe) as once in a hundred years.

devices and desires of their own hearts." But similar wilfulness and sin are to be found among all sorts and conditions of men; and if they prove anything against that special divine assistance which is given to the priest for the discharge of his special duties, they prove with exactly equal force that no divine assistance is granted to anybody for any purpose whatever. In other words, they prove the complete uselessness of prayer, and the utter untrustworthiness or mendacity of every promise contained in Holy Scripture.

But though the gift of the Holy Ghost by no means secures infallibility, it does produce, at least in every priest who heartily believes that he has received it, a spirit of profound humility, habitual caution, a deep sense of responsibility, conscientious study, unflinching courage, a steadiness of purpose and a well-balanced proportion and adjustment of efforts, which are far more valuable than mere tact. If in the discharge of the duties of the Christian ministry, whether on the "prophetical" or the "sacerdotal" side, we conspicuously fail, then—on the supposition that we were left entirely to our unaided judgment and efforts—we may feel personally humiliated. But, on the other hand, if we conspicuously succeed, we can scarcely avoid, and perhaps need not try to avoid, that proud elation which naturally attends the triumphant exercise of our intellectual and spiritual powers. As a matter of fact the noblest of Christian ministers, even in those religious bodies which attach no very special importance to ordination, and which even emphatically protest against the arrogance and the presumption (as they conceive) of the solemn assurance of the gift of the Holy Ghost in our own Ordinal—even these ministers habit-

ually acknowledge the divine help, and acknowledge also their entire dependence upon it. And surely it seems idle to admit incidentally what, when expressed in plain terms, we deny. We cannot possibly express *too* plainly—and especially at our very entrance upon a sacred and most difficult work—both what we need and what we may most confidently expect to receive. He who has it fixed in his mind *from the very first* that in every one of his ministerial acts he must be guided to the utmost by the Spirit of God, will not “lord it over God’s heritage”; he will not work only for popularity, much less for “filthy lucre”; he will not make a pompous display of his own personal and showy attainments; he will not exhibit his cleverness by startling paradoxes which may unsettle the faith of God’s little children; he will not be idle and slovenly in his teaching and his preparation; he will “watch for souls as one who must give an account.” When we seek our own glory; when we are tyrannical or negligent; when we relax our efforts for the recovering of the lost sheep, and for the relief of souls overwhelmed by sin and shame, it is because we *forget*, not because we remember, that we have “received the Holy Ghost.”

In the words, then, that we are considering, our Blessed Lord bestows upon His Apostles—and, in them, upon all the ministers of the Church who, “even unto the end of the world,” should be entrusted with the same or similar authority or obligations—the Holy Ghost, in order that they may possess that divine assistance which they may, indeed, wilfully disregard, but which, if they faithfully avail themselves of it, will render them “sufficient” for their arduous

work. And then He adds—reminding them what would be the most difficult of their duties, and implying that even for their discharge the Holy Ghost would “enable” them—“Whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.” For, beyond all doubt—as every clergyman knows from his own constant experience—by far the most difficult of the duties of the Christian minister is *the duty of ministering separately to separate souls*. It is comparatively, even positively, easy to minister to a whole congregation, because, in ministering to them, we are dealing only with general truths and general practical principles. And it is easy to arrive at absolute certitude about general truths and general principles. If nothing more were necessary for the conduct of life, no science of “casuistry” could have come into existence; and (to take an example from our Protestant casuists) the *Ductor Dubitantium* of Bishop Jeremy Taylor could never have been written. But there is really no such thing as life in general, or conduct in general. Each one of us has to confront at some particular moment some particular alternative of action. That children should obey their parents is a general principle of ethics; that children should obey their parents “in the Lord” is a general principle of religion and of the Christian religion. That “marriage is honourable in all” is a general truth both of religion and morals. But a young man, desiring to contract a perfectly honourable marriage, may be confronted by the fact that, unless he represses and extinguishes that desire, he must leave his sick or aged parents lonely and miserable, and perhaps deprived of that pecuniary support which

hitherto he has been able and willing to provide. Shall he marry or not? Would his marrying be right or wrong? A young man may feel very confident of an inward "call" to the work of the ministry among distant savages; he may feel reasonably sure of obtaining the confirmatory ecclesiastical sanction. But if he goes as a missionary to the cannibals at the other side of the world, he will break his mother's heart. Ought he to go? In some impulse of reckless passion or lust a young man has committed some grievous sin. It involves some other person besides himself. Either of these persons enters into new relations; becomes overwhelmed with remorse; finds perfect reparation and satisfaction utterly impossible; cannot even attempt it without inflicting irreparable disgrace and misery upon wholly innocent people; is nevertheless consumed by a longing to do something; at least to acknowledge the past wrong. Is that person justified, for the sake of personal relief of conscience, in making such an acknowledgment? Every clergyman who, especially in a city parish, has had "cure of souls" for twenty or thirty years, will be able, from his own personal knowledge, to fill in the details of such a case as this last in only too many ways. Now, these questions cannot be answered by repeating, scores of times over, some general principle. The questions arise out of an apparent *conflict* of general principles. They are "cases of conscience." It may be affirmed that, anyhow, each individual must settle them for himself. But, first, the man who tries to settle such questions for himself will generally find that his judgment is already hopelessly biased, on one side or the other, by an overmastering passion or a paralyzing dread. And,

second, Almighty God, not in religion only, but in the whole course of nature and intercourse of society, has mercifully provided that we shall obtain help and relief through the mediation of others.

Now, if the duties of a minister of Christ do not include dealing with such cases as these, it is hard to say what they do include. For these are *the only* cases of *real difficulty*. A priest may well say, "*How can I deal with them?*" And the answer is, "Receive thou the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest." A minister of Christ, dealing with such cases in simple honesty and dependence upon divine assistance, free from all personal bias, full at once of justice and mercy, jealous for the righteousness of God and longing for the salvation of the sinner, is likely to decide at least as impartially and accurately as the individual personally concerned. At any rate, if such a case be presented to him, he is *bound to decide*. He does not simply offer advice or suggestions: he delivers a *judgment* after hearing such evidence as is presented to him. The evidence may be incomplete, his own judgment may sometimes—though, in practice, very seldom—be mistaken. But this does not release him from his duty, nor impair the general utility of his ministrations. The Supreme Court of the United States is a true court, delivers valid judgments, is absolutely necessary to the just government of the nation, though some of its decisions may, at this very moment, be held to be mistaken by the very ablest lawyers in America, and would very possibly be reversed if the occasion presented itself for a reconsideration and a more complete argument.

Such cases, then, as I am considering will very fre-

quently be brought to the consideration and decision of Christ's ministers—and they must be dealt with as they arise. On the other hand, the ministers of Christ may sometimes be bound to seek them out, or to deal with them when presented by other parties than those personally concerned. But it must be observed that the words of our Lord are not addressed to the "laity," but to the "clergy." They lay upon *His ministers* the duty of dealing with troubled consciences, but they do not—at least directly, and taken alone—require those whose consciences are not troubled, nor even those whose consciences are troubled, to avail themselves of that particular kind of assistance. Nor is there a word said about *confession*—much less about a minute confession of all mortal sins, however remotely they may be connected with the particular distress which burdens the soul. It is neither affirmed nor implied that there is no forgiveness of sins except such as is officially declared by the minister of Christ. The *general* commission to the Apostles was, "Go ye into all the world and *preach the Gospel* to every creature." It is chiefly when the preaching of the Gospel, on the side both of law and of promise, produces a torment of conscience which compels the sufferer to have recourse for his own personal relief to the minister of Christ, that the duty of dealing with his separate case arises; and for the discharge of that very difficult duty Christ Himself has promised the assistance of the Holy Ghost.*

* Undoubtedly the Church of Rome maintains the "general" necessity—that is to say, the necessity in all ordinary cases—of "the Sacrament of Penance" for the forgiveness of post-baptismal sins. But even she does not affirm that there is no conceivable case in which forgiveness may be certainly received

It might seem, indeed, that the Gospel is so plain that nobody can possibly misunderstand it. It would seem to be beyond dispute that God requires from

without that "Sacrament." Thus the writer of the article on "The Sacrament of Penance" in the *Catholic Dictionary* says :

"It is true that perfect sorrow for sin which has offended so good a God, at once and without the addition of any external rite blots out the stain and restores the peace and love of God in the soul. 'There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.' But this perfect sorrow involves in a well-instructed Catholic the intention of fulfilling Christ's precept and receiving the Sacrament of Penance when opportunity occurs. This implicit desire of confession and absolution may exist in many Protestants who reject the Catholic doctrine on this point. They desire the Sacrament of Penance in this sufficient sense, that they earnestly wish to fulfil Christ's law so far as they can learn what it is. In this sense the Sacrament is necessary for the salvation of those who have fallen into mortal sin after baptism. They must receive it actually or by desire, this desire being either explicit or implicit. This point is of capital importance for the apprehension of Catholic doctrine. We in no way deny that God is ready to forgive the sins of non-Catholics who are in good faith and who turn to Him with loving sorrow."

And this is but an expansion of the authoritative statement of the Council of Trent—or at least seems to be perfectly consistent with it. See *Canones et Decreta Conc. Trident., Sess. XIV, c. iv.* : "Docet (Synodus) præterea, etsi contritionem hanc aliquando caritate perfectam esse contingat, hominemque Deo reconciliare, priusquam hoc Sacramentum actu suscipiatur, ipsam nihilominus reconciliationem ipsi contritioni sine sacramenti voto, quod in illa includitur, non esse adscribendam." The "quod in illa includitur" is always to be understood. Undoubtedly *every* truly contrite sinner wishes to do God's will and submit to God's conditions, and his ignorance will not be imputed to him for sin. His *wish* will *include* even what he does not know to be generally necessary.

everybody who seeks forgiveness, repentance and faith and obedience, and a determination to avoid for the future both sin and the occasions of sin, and also "fruits meet for repentance." All this *is* as plain as words can make it. But we ought to know, from our own sad experience more even than from our observation of others, that "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." We may only too easily deceive ourselves; unfortunately, without deceiving ourselves, we may be deliberate hypocrites, wilfully deceiving others. Hence, also, arises the necessity of that remitting or retaining of sins which Christ entrusted to His Apostles and priests. Let us consider an actual example of the exercise of the power of "retaining" sins entrusted to the Apostles of Christ. In the first flush of Christian enthusiasm the believers in Jerusalem "were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need."* Especially Barnabas, "having a field, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the Apostles' feet."† Absurd, and ultimately disastrous, as this conduct was—for very shortly the Jerusalem Church was overwhelmed in the lowest depths of utter destitution, and had to be supported by the contributions of the whole Christian world—it was, as an expression of Christian charity and perfectly unselfish sincerity, singularly beautiful. But its whole value, such as it was, depended upon its perfect sincerity. Barnabas, however, of course without intending it, set what we may call a "fashion" of a peculiar kind of Christian generosity; and the generosity which is a "fashion" very easily

* Acts ii. 44-45; iv. 32-35.

† *Ibid.* 36-37.

becomes morally worthless, and lends itself readily to deceit, and is in all sorts of indirect ways demoralizing. We all know the story of Ananias and Sapphira. These unhappy people must needs be "in the fashion." They also must "sell a possession," and gain the corresponding applause and credit which all really good actions are sure to secure. But why not get credit for generosity as cheaply as possible? Who could know how much they had received for the lands they sold? So they brought to the Apostles "a part of the price." Meanwhile, they probably believed that they were genuine, and even peculiarly liberal, Christians, and that their sins were forgiven. So it was necessary that they should be completely and terribly undeceived. "Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost." Surely this is a complete illustration of the meaning of Christ's words: "Whosoever sins ye shall retain, they are retained." No doubt it may be urged that some of the incidents of this fearful case are represented as supernatural. But, in whatever way S. Peter obtained his information, and whatever special punishment Almighty God may have thought fit to inflict, S. Peter, without a moment's hesitation, passed judgment upon Ananias—declared that he was not forgiven, laid bare his hypocrisy, and delivered him over to the divine discipline. In a similar manner, S. Paul passes judgment on the gross offender in the Corinthian Church—a judgment concerning *his sin*; and he "retains" that sin. But at a later period, when the Apostolic discipline had wrought its blessed work, S. Paul "forgives" this very same person, "in the Person of Christ." No

doubt the Apostles possessed certain spiritual gifts which were peculiar to themselves; but if that gift of the Holy Ghost which qualifies the minister of Christ to remit or retain sins was peculiar to the Apostles, then all Church *discipline*, since the death of the Apostles, is unjust and absurd. All just punishment must be the result of *a knowledge of the sin*.

In the enormous majority of cases the ministers of Christ remit or retain sins by the simple preaching of the Gospel—including, as it does, both the law and the promises of Christ. Where the Bible is read and the Gospel faithfully preached, scarcely anybody can be in any reasonable doubt whether or not his sins are forgiven. A man who should come to a priest and say, "I stole fifty dollars last week, but I am not sorry; I have the money now, but I do not intend to repay it; will you remit my sin and grant me absolution?" would be either a hopeless lunatic or an impudent ruffian. And, on the other hand, what troubled sinner can listen to the sweet consolations of Christ without peace and rest? He knows that he hates and loathes his sin; that he is inwardly determined, by God's help, utterly to forsake it; that he is prepared to the utmost of his power to undo the wrong he has done. He believes God's promise, he puts his "whole trust and confidence in God's mercy" through Jesus Christ. What should prevent his entering into the perfect peace of an assured forgiveness? In his case the general truths and principles of the Gospel are capable of easy and immediate application: he applies them and is at rest.

But there are three classes of persons who know *the inside* of life as no others do—lawyers, physicians, and priests. *They* know how thin is the crust upon which

multitudes of people, even "in good society," are walking, and beneath which are the raging fires of bottomless perdition. They all know secrets which, if they were so incredibly and fiendishly base as to reveal them, might blast the most solid reputations and overwhelm multitudes of innocent people in hopeless ruin. They also know how tight and intricate are the knots by which those who have done wrong are bound—knots that no mere repentance, however sincere, can possibly untie. These unhappy evil-doers are the people to whom the Gospel, as ordinarily preached, brings no relief. They perfectly understand the general principles; their difficulties are "cases of conscience" where principles conflict. Pardon must be preceded by penitence; by satisfaction, so far as is possible; by removing from the occasions of sin. But the peculiarity of their case is that they *cannot* make satisfaction except at the cost of innocent people; and they *cannot* remove from the occasions of sin without revealing or suggesting secrets which would wreck the happiness of pure and blameless lives. Far short of these extreme cases are the cases of those who are just beginning to be entangled in the web of sin. They feel themselves inwardly disgraced and disqualified for Christian fellowship. They dare not come to the Holy Communion. They feel, "If the rector knew what I am he would never receive me; if the other members of the church knew what I am they would shrink from contact with me. I must somehow make a clean breast of it." It may be said that the general preaching of the Gospel *ought to be* enough for them, and perhaps it really ought, but as a matter of fact *it is not*. And the question arises, Has the minister of Christ, the

man who, at his ordination, was assured that he was endowed with the Holy Ghost for the very purpose of dealing with such cases as these, any help for him? If he has no help for him in the pulpit, has he no help for him at all? For my own part, I believe that this question answers itself. I think that such a person should have the opportunity of coming to his clergyman, of revealing to him whatever he chooses to reveal, and of obtaining a clear and judicial answer to this question, "Are my sins forgiven, or are they not? You preach a Gospel to *mankind in general*: have you any Gospel *for me*?"

It has not unfrequently been proposed, and sometimes even in the serious form of deliberate resolutions in Diocesan or General Conventions, that the clergy should be peremptorily forbidden to receive any such confessions, and to administer to those who offer them the consolation of absolution. I am free to confess that, in my judgment, any such legislation would imply a direct and explicit contradiction of our Saviour's own commands, and would render it absolutely necessary for everybody who believes our Lord's words to renounce a ministry which had been so fatally attenuated. In fact, I know of no religious sect in which such legislation would be possible, or in which it could be executed. At any cost to ourselves, we Christian priests *are bound* to receive all who come to us, to hear whatever concerning *their own* sins and troubles they think fit to reveal to us, and to administer to them such advice, or reproof, or comfort, as their case may require; in a word, also, depending upon the guidance of the Holy Ghost, to "remit" or "retain" their sins.

But what is it that we do, or believe that we do, or intend to do, in granting or refusing absolution? The penitent comes to us for this very reason—that he is distracted by “ifs” and “buts” and “perhapses.” Are we to say to him (of course excluding the case of deliberate lying, which the pretended penitent would know rendered the whole matter abortive and sacrilegious), “*If* you are not quite mistaken about your past conduct and your present feelings, *perhaps* I may venture to say that God will forgive your sins; *but* I cannot be any more sure than you are yourself; and *perhaps* it will not be unsafe for you, in a case of doubt, to rely as much on the mercy as on the justice of Almighty God”? I hope it is not irreverent to say that it seems to me scarcely necessary that we should “receive the Holy Ghost” to enable us to perform so excessively jejune a service. This would be indeed giving stones for bread and scorpions for fish. Our precise duty is to do that for a man which his personal bias, or his fear, or his intense desire, incapacitates him from doing for himself. We must, relying upon the aid of the Holy Ghost, upon the Gospel of Christ, upon the interpretation of the Gospel contained in the Creeds and the Canons and Decrees of the Church—relying upon these, with prayer and love and justice, we must *judge* the man. We must say to him, in effect, “You come to me baffled and perplexed; you cannot be sure that you are not deceiving yourself; you have told me enough of your case to enable me to see it with impartial eyes. Acting as God’s minister, I judge that, if you be not wilfully deceiving me, you are really contrite, and ‘I absolve you from all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’”

Have we then usurped the authority of the Almighty? Have we presumed, by our own authority, to remit sins which God retains, or retain sins which God remits? Everybody knows that no Church in Christendom, and no individual priest, ever makes pretensions so blasphemous. But we have decided for a perplexed conscience what it was unable to decide for itself. We have *actually brought* to a terrified sinner that forgiveness of God which he did not venture to claim for himself, and for want of which he was dying. We have actually opened the prison-door which God had unlocked; we have taken the prisoner by the hand and led him out. We are only—is not that more than enough?—"the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." But we *are* His ministers and stewards; and, in absolving a penitent sinner, we have done the work of the ministry and dispensed the divine mysteries.

NOTE.—In this sermon I have spoken of the ministers of Christ as *priests*. I am very well aware that there are many clergymen who seem to think that there is some special advantage or merit in describing themselves simply as *presbyters*, and I am always very much puzzled to know, or even guess, where the advantage or merit is to be found. We were all ordained to a particular office by means of a form which is called *The Form and Manner of Ordering Priests*. For my part I was never "ordered" a *presbyter*, unless that word is an *exact synonym* for the word priest. If it be, it would seem to me an affectation, or an extreme eccentricity, to call myself only a presbyter; if it be not, it would seem to me hypocrisy to have been "ordered a *priest*" at all with the belief that there cannot be a priest in the Christian Church. But it is said that a priest implies a sacrifice, and that there is no sacrifice in the Christian Church; and therefore that there are in the Christian Church no priests; and further—must I not add?—that our Ordinal is,

at the very least, seriously misleading. But have not the priests of the Christian Church a sacrifice—or many sacrifices—to offer? I think sacrifices may be divided into three classes:

1. Those which are real, and independently and intrinsically sufficient.

2. Those which are real, but sufficient only as anticipatory or commemorative, or otherwise expressly connected with, some other and perfect sacrifice.

3. Those which are neither real nor independently sufficient, but called sacrifices by metaphor or analogy.

A sacrifice is *real* when it consists of something offered to Almighty God wholly different from, and independent of, the moods of our own minds. Thus the Jewish sacrifices were *real*: they consisted of living animals slain and presented to God. The Eucharist, as a sacrifice, is *real*, because it consists of “these *Thy holy gifts* [the elements of the Eucharist] which we now *offer unto Thee.*” Prayer and praise are not, as sacrifices, *real*, because they are only moods of our own minds or verbal expressions of those moods.

A sacrifice is *intrinsically and independently sufficient* when, in itself, it perfectly satisfies Almighty God. The only sacrifice of this kind is the sacrifice of Christ. This sacrifice is *real*, because it was the offering to God of Christ’s Body (“a Body hast Thou prepared for me”) with all which that implies. But it is also unique in this respect—that the sacrifice is also (viewed from a different side) the priest.

The Jewish sacrifices were *real*, but not *independently sufficient*. To express the matter briefly, they were anticipatory of the sacrifice of Christ.

The Eucharistic Sacrifice is *real*, but not *independently sufficient*. It is a commemoration of a sacrifice already complete, as the Jewish sacrifices were anticipatory of the same sacrifice.

Prayers and praises are called sacrifices by a metaphor or an analogy.

If it be inconsistent with the sole perfection and sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice to regard the Eucharist (on one side) as a sacrifice, it was equally inconsistent with that sole perfection to call the slain bullocks offered on Jewish altars sacrifices.

The whole discussion on this matter is very largely a barren logomachy. But the objections generally urged against regarding the Eucharist as in any sense a sacrifice imply, so far as they have any validity at all, not only the reality, but the *independent sufficiency*, of the Jewish sacrifices.

It may be well to note a few points upon which both the Roman Church and our own, and all schools and parties within our own, *are agreed*. The only sacrifice perfectly sufficient and satisfactory to God is the sacrifice of Christ. That sacrifice was not offered before the Incarnation and Crucifixion. It has never been repeated, and never will be. It is permanently efficacious; and on its efficacy depends the value of all religious services, both heretofore among the Jews and now among Christians.

Similarly as to Absolution. Nobody believes that any priest can "remit" or "retain" sins by his own authority. Nobody believes that a priest's absolution avails for the forgiveness of one who is not really contrite, nor that he can "retain" the sins of one who really is. It is perfectly notorious that we are all agreed on these points. The *differences* of opinion on these subjects that are still possible and actually exist are by no means unimportant, but they do not involve the slightest disparagement of the sacrifice of Christ, or any claim to possess the incommunicable powers and attributes of Almighty God. Whether the Eucharist can, in any proper sense, be called a sacrifice, is too wide a question to be discussed in a note. There is, however, not the slightest doubt that it is so called in the most ancient extant Liturgies, which manifestly imply a common source of much higher antiquity; and also by those early Fathers who affirmed with unshaken constancy the absolute completeness of the One Sacrifice of Christ "finished" on the Cross. It seems rather absurd to repudiate as a heresy a belief which was held by all those Fathers who are regarded as the chief witnesses of what orthodoxy is.

Many long and elaborate expositions have been written of our Saviour's words, which are the text of this sermon, which throw far less light upon their meaning than the simple verses by J. H. (now Cardinal) Newman. They were written "off Cape S. Vincent, December 14, 1832."

ABSOLUTION.

O Father, list a sinner's call !
 Fain would I hide from man my fall—
 But I must speak, or faint—
 I cannot wear guilt's silent thrall ;
 Cleanse me, kind Saint !

“Sinner ne'er blunted yet sin's goad :
 Speed thee, my son, a safer road,
 And sue His pardoning smile
 Who walked woe's depths, bearing man's load
 Of guilt the while.”

Yet raise a mitigating hand,
 And minister some potion bland,
 Some present fever-stay !
 Lest one for whom His work was plann'd
 Die from disnay.

“Look not to me—no grace is mine ;
 But I can lift the mercy-sign.
 This would'st thou ? Let it be !
 Kneel down, and take the word divine,
 ABSOLVO TE.”

On the subject considered in the note on p. 184, I am enabled, by the kind permission of the Rev. Hall Harrison, M. A., the biographer of Bishop Kerfoot, to add to this note the following valuable letter from that Bishop to the Rev. W. R. Churton, of Cambridge, England. I need not say that the Bishop's opinion is deserving of far more consideration than any opinion of mine on this subject. I entirely believe that the meaning of the Ordination service *as a whole* would complement—if it were admitted, or even not excluded—the insufficiency (as I conceive it) of the Alternative form of actual Ordination. But that fact only confirms, I think, my position that the deliberate omission of the words “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” and “Whosoever sins,” etc., stultifies the service *as a whole*. The words must be omitted, if at all, *for some reason*. I can imagine no other

reason than this: the person who omits those words does not believe them to be certainly true. Moreover, the actual laying on of hands, with the appropriate words, is surely of the very essence of Ordination; and if the form of words used has been deliberately chosen *for the very purpose of omitting* what is implied in certain prayers which, however suitable, are not of the very essence of Ordination, the inevitable inference is that when the Bishop *comes to do the very thing* for which the prayers have been a preparation, he carefully guards against being supposed to intend what the prayers, taken alone, might have been supposed to imply. I offer this opinion with great diffidence, but "with my present lights" it seems to me sound. I hope Protestantism has gained more than it has lost by degrading Orders from the dignity of a true Sacrament. "The essential matter and form of Ordination consists only in the imposition of the Bishop's hands, joined to the invocation of the Holy Spirit." My objection to the alternative form in our own Ordinal is that it contains no "invocation of the Holy Spirit"; and that it was adopted for the very purpose of excluding that invocation. Here follows Bishop Kerfoot's letter:

"August 6, 1874.

" In the American Church, I believe that most of the bishops use the words 'Receive the Holy Ghost' in ordaining a priest. I always do. But the alternative form is, we of course hold, equally efficient. The fact is, as you of course know, that in some services (I remember the fact so given in *Maskell*) no such one form, or act, or set of words was used; but the 'Order' given was defined by the *whole* service, and the Holy Ghost invoked in more parts than that one part of the ordination. The form prescribed in the Church of England Prayer Book, and most rightly kept in our American Prayer Book, and among us generally used, is surely right; but it is not essential; nor is it the earliest form or mode. I prefer and always use it, but no principle is involved necessarily . . . the office given is defined all through the service. If any advocates of low views think they would gain by leaving out *that* special form, they are mistaken. . . .

“But I am clear that all acts of bishop or priest or deacon are *precatory*. ‘I baptize,’ etc., ‘Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a bishop,’ etc.—all are prayers of office; *prayers of sure efficacy, because put up by the officer commissioned so to invoke the gift of the Spirit.* (Of course *sacramental* gifts may be hindered by the wilful sin of the person.) None of us has, or can have, grace to give, nor can we command. The Holy Ghost *is* present, and HE gives the grace in the sacrament and in the ordination. Putting it thus (and this seems to me a strong view, too), I have found believing Evangelicals assent at once and cheerfully. I try to win them to realize and confess their own convictions. Most truly yours,

J. B. KERFOOT.”

THE JUDGMENT OF GOD IN THE EPIDEMIC OF VIOLENCE AND FRAUD.*

And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God.—DEUT. viii. 19-20.

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. . . . The wages of sin is death.—ROM. vi. 21-23.

I propose to speak to you this morning about a very serious epidemic, of which it is only too plain that very many of us are sick, and of which no small number have pitifully died. You will find no mention of this epidemic in any bills of mortality, or in the reports of any Bureau of Vital Statistics. It is not the Asiatic cholera, nor yellow fever, nor small-pox, nor diphtheria; it makes itself manifest by no eruption of pustules, no blotches on the skin, no exhausting nausea, or agony of colic, or racking torture of cramp. Would to God, one might almost say—would to God that it did! for then, perhaps, we might betake ourselves to some sort of doctoring before the fatal collapse. On the contrary, *this* epidemic is ushered in, not by the parching heat of fever, but only by a soothing and delicious rise of temperature; not by acute pain, but by a pleasing exaltation of sensibility. We think that we are better than we ever were; the world looks

* Preached on the fourteenth Sunday after Trinity, 1884.

brighter to us ; the gayeties and delights of society are more exhilarating ; we say to ourselves again and again in happy surprise : " Who could have believed that it was possible to get so much enjoyment out of life ? " We are lured on to our destruction, because the worse we get the better we think we are ; and we scarcely realize that we are sick until the death-rattle is in our throats and the death-sweat upon our brows.

The epidemic I am about to speak of is the epidemic of fraud and vice, of abject cowardice and brutal violence. And, to prevent misunderstanding, I may here say over again what I have said to you scores of times before : I do *not* believe the perfection of Christian character requires, I do not even believe that *Christian perfection* admits of, a rigorous asceticism.*

* Of course I put out of consideration highly exceptional individual temperaments, or conditions of society ; nor do I include under " rigorous asceticism " such abstinence or fasting as the Catholic Church requires from her members. Hermits and monks and nuns have had a great work to do, both for the Church and the world, and in innumerable instances they have nobly done it.

Wake again, Teutonic Father-ages,
 Speak again, beloved primæval creeds ;
 Flash ancestral spirit from your pages,
 Wake the greedy age to noble deeds.

Tell us how of old our saintly mothers
 Schooled themselves by vigil, fast and prayer,
 Learnt to love as Jesus loved before them,
 While they bore the cross which poor men bear.

Tell us how our stout, crusading fathers
 Fought and died for God, and not for gold ;
 Let their love, their faith, their boyish daring,
 Distance-mellowed, gild the days of old.

The world in which God has thought fit to place us is a very good and beautiful world; and we are not only permitted, but we are *bound*, to make the very utmost that we possibly can make of all its innocent enjoyments. To be indifferent to the beauties of Nature, the ravishing delights of music, is to be blind and deaf to revelations of the beauty and harmony of God. Our Heavenly Father has promised to us that we shall not be tempted above what we are able to bear; and, that He may keep one part of this gracious promise to us, He has furnished us with innumerable relaxations and recreations and refreshing delights. We are wicked and ungrateful when we fling these precious gifts away. No human spirit can bear the unrelieved pressure of business, the unremitting strain and incessant exactions of mere duty: in ways innumerable does God "give to His beloved sleep." Not only the yellow fields of waving corn, but the very weeds, are beautiful; and the sublime majesty of the hills from which we dig coal and iron fills our souls with an unutterable rapture of delight and awe. And when we turn to human society and the ordinary occupations of mankind, we still find nothing evil. Business is not only lawful, it is not only necessary, it is also, in its

Tell us how the sexless workers, thronging,
Angel-tended, round the convent door,
Wrought to Christian faith and holy order
Savage hearts alike and barren moor.

Ye who built the churches where we worship,
Ye who framed the laws by which we move,
Fathers, long belied, and long forsaken,
Oh! forgive the children of your love!

(C. KINGSLEY: *The Saint's Tragedy*.)

very essence, morally and spiritually good. Without a metaphor and without exaggeration, it is among the means of grace. There is scarcely a virtue which it does not bring into exercise and render more healthful and robust. Moreover, in every progressive and prosperous country it is, in spite of human folly and human sin, for the most part morally sound. So long as society is held together at all, it must needs be held together by truth and honesty.

We may go forth, then, "to our work and to our labour until the evening" with a good courage and a good conscience. We are doing our duty, our duty to Almighty God, when we throw ourselves heart and soul into our daily occupations. To the faithful child of God there is nothing common or unclean; nor need we in the least distress ourselves when our virtues, our diligence, and thrift, and integrity, and foresight, and versatility, bring their proper reward. He who possesses these qualities can scarcely fail in a country like this, of practically unlimited extent and inexhaustible resources, to grow rich; he may, easily enough, become very rich; nor is he morally justified in setting any artificial and wilful limits to his accumulations. Nobody has a right to say, "I am rich enough" so long as it is honestly possible for him to become richer. We may depend upon it that God Himself will take care to keep us as poor as it is necessary that we should remain. Perhaps you may say—if anybody so fortunate is listening to me—"I have more wealth already than I know what to do with; it has got so deeply and firmly rooted that it seems to grow of itself, and every new success brings only a new responsibility

and a heavier burden." But surely, my friend, if you will look only twice at the matter, you will perceive in a moment that you are deluding yourself. If *you* do not know what to do with your wealth, there are thousands of people who can teach you. Are there, then, no poor people left in the world? None who are hungry, or athirst, or naked, or sick, or in prison? Are there no young men whom, out of your superabundance, you could start in life, and help in their first struggles towards an honest independence? Did you never hear of such a thing as founding or endowing hospitals, and universities, and public libraries? Would it be quite impossible for you, being so overburdened with riches, to adorn your city with some enduring monument in honour of the illustrious dead? Nay, to come down to a matter so ridiculously minute that it may well have escaped your attention, have you never happened to notice that, even in this very Baltimore, the steeples of two of your richest churches are yet, after many years, unfinished? Might it not be worth your while to inquire whether there are any heathen yet to be converted? and whether God may not have bestowed upon you wealth, and the power of getting more wealth, that, even in far-off lands, generations to come may mingle with their prayers and thanksgivings the name of a benefactor unknown except by his generous gifts? Believe me, when I hear a man, apparently in earnest, affirming that he cares nothing for wealth and wants no more of it, I can never help feeling sure that he knows very much less than he suspects of his own mind.

I repeat, then, that when I say a serious and dangerous epidemic is upon us, I do not mean that everybody

is sick and dying. Everybody is not sick and dying of cholera in Naples.* When we read that in a single day there have been in that city three hundred deaths, we know perfectly well that there are also some two hundred and ninety-nine thousand survivors. But does anybody for that reason regard the cholera in Naples as a danger to be trifled with? And, similarly, the epidemic of which I speak, the epidemic of fraud and vice, of abject cowardice and brutal violence, is real and serious. Nothing can make it more real than it is; but it is rendered far more serious by general indifference. Multitudes of people ignore it; and yet many more regard this deadly sickness as merely sporadic or accidental, traceable to no ascertainable cause, and likely enough to die out of itself. It is impossible, indeed, for those who read the newspapers to doubt the facts; but there are very many people who regard it as a kind of duty, or at least as a mark of refinement, to remain as ignorant as they possibly can of everything which is disagreeable or offensive. They are like the elegant triflers in Boccaccio's *Decameron* who, while the plague was raging around them, betook themselves to enchanted gardens of bliss, and passed their time in a round of gayeties and in telling one another stories of fashionable lust. But if you will not read the newspapers, I will take care for once that you shall hear something of what they contain. I will compel you, so far as it is in my power, to realize what is the moral condition of that society of which you form a part. I will try to show you how it has come to be what it most unquestionably is. I will do my best to force upon your convictions what are the only remedies of

* Autumn of 1884.

which this most dangerous disease admits; and I will try to make you feel, if only God will so far help me, that you yourselves must come down from your lofty eminence of selfish serenity, and with your own hands apply those remedies without which, most surely, every one of us must perish. God has no blessing whatever for people whose religion consists only in enjoying privileges without discharging duties; and nothing is more absolutely certain than that if you are satisfied to save your own souls while your neighbours are hurrying to destruction, your own souls will be lost.

Where, then, shall I begin the evidence? For my difficulty is not to find, but to select it. I might begin at the very top, and remind you how fraud has been rampant and triumphant in the high places of the government of this nation;* a fraud, and an impunity of fraud, which is the amazement and terror of the whole civilized world. I might remind you of gigantic and colossal dishonesty in almost every department of government and administration, left even without investigation until the disgust of an outraged people could be no longer disregarded. I might remind you of investigations more recklessly impudent and shamelessly dishonest than the very frauds themselves. I might remind you of prosecutions, undertaken by the highest legislative authority, the very object of which seemed to be to protect the criminal and to defeat justice; and how completely this object was accomplished. I might tell you the familiar story of bribery and corruption in almost

* I assume that charges made by *all* the political parties and *all* their newspapers must have some real foundation.

every State of the Union, and in almost every city in every State. I might remind you of the repudiation, by what once were august and honoured legislatures, of their undisputed debts. I might name to you those names—the names of men once high in office and known over half the world—which by an almost universal suffrage have been doomed to everlasting infamy; doomed for crimes which would have sent any labouring man to the penitentiary for the rest of his life. But I will not begin on this high stratum: I will begin rather at the base of the social pyramid, and I will remind you of what is the present condition of what we call *the working-classes*.*

Nobody, of course, can deny that there is among the working-classes a very serious amount of dissatisfaction and discontent; and although a large part of this discontent and dissatisfaction is merely silly and irrational, it is also what we all agree to call exceedingly natural. For, in fact—and this is what we generally mean by natural—we are ourselves all liable to dissatisfaction and discontent; and how many of us in church this morning, when we really come to think of it, even though we wear broadcloth, and have to keep up what is called an appearance, are, at the bottom, workingmen? We also, like a coloured hod-carrier, earn our living by sweat of brow or brain. We also earn wages, though with a due regard to our own dignity we call them salaries or fees; and we also are often dissatisfied with our wages, or salaries, or fees. We are silly enough to think we deserve more than we get; and I say that this is silly, because it is

*Only too many far more conclusive illustrations have been forced upon our attention during the last two years.

always foolish to complain of what it is in our own power, at any moment of our lives, if not to remedy, at least to test. Are you dissatisfied, my friend, with your wages, or salary, or fees? And do you really think you are worth more than you get? Nothing can possibly be easier—though I warn you to try the experiment with extreme caution—nothing, I repeat, is easier than to find out if you are mistaken. Give up your present position, go out into the open labour market and offer your services to the highest bidder. The competition of employers for really competent workmen, in all departments of work, is quite as severe as the competition of skilful workmen for employment. Do you hesitate?—as indeed you very justly may: then there is a lurking suspicion in your own bosom that you are *not* worth more, and your dissatisfaction is silly. By dissatisfaction, then, I mean the feeling that we are not getting as much as we ought to get in remuneration for our services; by discontent I mean the detestable feeling which expresses itself in such terms as these: “My neighbour is ten times, or ten thousand times, as rich as I am, and I am as good as he is, or better; why should he ride in a carriage while I must walk, and why should he have command of all the luxuries of life while I can scarcely secure its necessaries?” And is it really possible that a sane man, except in moments of physical depression, when he is scarcely master of himself, can encourage or cherish such thoughts as these? What harm is my rich neighbour doing to me? Most likely, if I am a workingman, he is employing me and paying me wages; but, in any case, is he robbing me of a single cent, or does he deprive me of a single blessing? Does not the sun shine as warmly

and brightly, and the moon with as serene a beauty, upon me as upon him? Has he been able to monopolize the atmosphere, or to enclose the ocean within metes and bounds? Can he deprive me of the fragrance of the flowers or the songs of birds? Can he steal from me the love of wife and children, the respect of my neighbours, the dear affection of friends, the testimony of a good conscience? Let him be as rich as he will, and if it is for his true happiness let him grow richer and richer every day of his life; he does no harm to me.

If the dissatisfaction and discontent of the working-classes amounted to no more than this, it might safely be left to cure itself, or be cured by better education and a wider knowledge of the world. But it is very much more than this. If you will talk to any intelligent workingman of the discontented and dissatisfied sort, he will say to you something like this: "Of course we should like to be better off than we are, and we sometimes envy rich people; but, after all, we don't complain that they are rich; what we *do* complain of is that many men and corporations have grown rich by what everybody acknowledges to be fraud, and when they *are* rich they can buy whatever they like. They can buy laws; they can buy charters; they can buy juries; it is not now, perhaps, as bad as it used to be, but not long ago they could buy judges. What would happen *to me* if I were out of work for three months? I should have to starve, and, what is much worse, my wife and children would have to starve too. And if, while they were clamoring for bread, and clothes just enough to cover their nakedness, I were to steal a five-dollar bill, what would happen to me

then? I should have to go to the penitentiary, and I don't pretend to deny that it would be right that I should go; at any rate, it would be right enough for me to go if everybody else who did the same thing were sent to the penitentiary also. But if the manager, or cashier, or director of a bank, with a certain income of ten or twenty thousand a year, and his wife and children rolling in luxury—if *he* were to steal, not five dollars, but five hundred thousand, not for the sake of keeping his wife and children from starvation, but for the sake of gambling in stocks, what would happen to *him*? *Nothing whatever would happen to him!* Dozens of people would find themselves so mixed up with his frauds that it would be their interest to pay his thefts and hush the matter up. If he were arrested and tried he would buy the jury; if he were convicted and imprisoned he would buy the jailers; and in six months' time we should discover that with his ill-gotten gains he had crossed the ocean, and had settled down to spend the rest of his days in idle luxury on the sunny shores of the Mediterranean." Something like that is what our dissatisfied and discontented workingman would say; and the worst of it is that everybody in church this morning knows that it is only too frequently and too scandalously true.

Hence it comes to pass that the dissatisfaction and discontent of the working-classes, being to no small extent justifiable, becomes venomous and very highly dangerous. They forget that even many exceptions do not disprove the rule. They believe, or half believe, that "all these things are against them"—society, wealth, capital—nay, the very laws and the administrators of the laws. What, then, is left them but to take

the law into their own hands? Their condition not only needs improving, but by perfectly lawful and practicable methods might without difficulty be improved. If capital is too strong for them, they might, by judicious co-operation, themselves become capitalists. If a single workman cannot contract with an employer on equal terms, workmen can combine, and can then afford, if not to dictate, at least to wait. But, goaded on by injustice as well as misfortune, and also misled by unprincipled demagogues, who at least can make an easy living out of their self-assumed leadership, they have no patience to wait; and what is the result?

Not long ago—I think it was in Pennsylvania, but it matters nothing where—the workpeople in a glass manufactory struck for higher wages, as they had a perfect right to do. Their employers accepted the situation and proceeded to carry on their work with the help of other workmen; as they also, and the other workmen so employed by them, had a perfect right to do. But the strikers were not satisfied to be free themselves: they were determined to rob their fellow-workmen of the means of earning an honest living. It mattered little to them how many common labourers there were, for they were all useless without a skilled foreman, and a skilled foreman had been secured. Him, therefore, they determined to disable. They attacked him in a hovel or cottage where, hearing of their purpose, he had taken refuge. They beat him nearly to death, and then with their cruel hands they tore his eyes out of their sockets; and so, blind and wounded, they left him to perish. We may assume that there was a sheriff in the county, a Governor in

the State. And what did they do? There was a whole mob of strikers engaged actively in the outrage, every one of whom was an accomplice. So the authorities—if they can be called authorities—arrested two or three of the wrong men, and were, of course, obliged to release them. *That* is what they did—“only that and nothing more.” And the unhappy victim, probably dead long since, under the protection of the American flag and in the very heart of American civilization, was left unhelped and unavenged.

Probably at the present moment, certainly a few days ago, large districts in Ohio were in virtual insurrection—that is to say, hundreds of men were setting the laws at defiance; and the “authorities”—for one knows not what else to call them, though authority they had none—were unable or unwilling to protect the lives and property of the peaceful citizens. The miners had struck for wages. They destroyed property, they committed many murders. The sheriff was so reasonably alarmed that he telegraphed for help to the Governor of the State. The Governor refused to help until, by more citizens being murdered and houses wrecked, the sheriff should have *proved* himself powerless. Meanwhile, leaving his “sword” behind him—that sword without which he was for all practical purposes good for nothing—that high official, the Governor of the State, betakes himself to the disturbed districts, and man to man addresses himself to the rioters. He begs and beseeches them to spare him the responsibility of *being a Governor*. He makes eloquent speeches. For are not murderers and robbers men and brethren, possessed also of the franchise, and able to swell a majority at any election? I know not what

has come of it. But when rulers "bear the sword in vain," we surely know that whoever wants the sword will sooner or later snatch it out of the hand of the incapable magistrate. And, to pass from violence to fraud, who does not know how serious an item in the cost of all production is the price that must be paid, not for superior skill or steady labour, but as a heavy premium for insurance against sheer robbery? Who does not know that foremen have to be employed not only to tell the workmen what to do and how to do it, but to watch them, that they do not steal their master's time, or by reckless and dishonest negligence waste their master's materials?

But after all there is much to be said for the working-class. They are not very thoroughly educated; they know very little of the world; their lot in life is very exacting and full of disappointments. *Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God. I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds.** So it was in the days of the prophet Jeremiah, and so it is in our days. It is in the higher strata of business and society that we too often find the grossest, the most dangerous, and the most inexcusable corruption. You remember what I said to you about business—that it is lawful, necessary, laudable, and in the main honest. And what I said about business in general I repeat concerning every separate kind of genuine business, and concerning all the conditions that are essential to its success. But let

* Jeremiah v. 4-5.

us consider, for a moment, what genuine business is. It is always a series of *exchanges*—the exchange of commodities for commodities, of services for services, or of services for commodities. There is no real business where there is nothing to sell and nothing to buy. Again, a great part of the genuine business of a highly civilized country like ours consists of enormous enterprises which can only be carried on by the joint contributions of a large number of capitalists. Each of the contributors has *shares* in the general stock; and these shares, as everybody knows, are for many people the best and safest of investments. Moreover, these shares can most advantageously and safely be obtained by the agency of experienced and skilful brokers. Thus we have stock brokers and a stock exchange; and this business, again, being a genuine business, consisting in a real exchange of one real thing for another real thing of equivalent value, is lawful and necessary and laudable, and often highly and honestly lucrative. And once again, no business, on a large scale, can be carried on without *speculation*; and it is worth while to consider what we mean by speculation. We mean the habit of looking about us, looking as far ahead as our eyes can see; taking care that we do not give more than is necessary for what we want to buy, or get less than we are honestly entitled to for what we want to sell. This, then, as a necessary condition of genuine business, is itself also lawful and necessary and laudable.

But everybody knows that there is a large amount of business carried on, both in this country and in Europe, which is not business at all. It does *not* consist in the exchange of one valuable service or commodity for an-

other. The sellers have really nothing to sell; and if they had, the buyers do not want to buy. The memoranda of their transactions are of course committed to writing; and in these documents one might find undoubtedly such words as cotton or coffee or corn; but neither party to the transaction will touch a grain of wheat or a bean of coffee or a flock of cotton. One will gain by the transaction and the other will lose. The one may gain a fortune and the other may be beggared; but, however little the winner gains or however much, *he will have given no valuable consideration in return.* The parties engaged in this kind of "business" might have expressed everything they wanted to say, with the necessary variation of time or rate or form, in the following neat formula—for the one: "I will bet you two to one that in sixty days corn will be so much a bushel"; and for the other: "I take your bet." Now, can anybody fail to perceive that, by whatever name we may choose to call a transaction of this sort, it is pure and simple gambling? For what is the essence of gambling? It has indeed many adjuncts, all of them wicked and detestable; but what is it in itself in spite of all disguises and refinements? Gambling is a transaction in which a man seeks to make money on a skilful computation of chances and without the exchange of any one valuable commodity for another. Now, we know, everybody knows, that transactions are carried on in this country and in all highly civilized countries, under the forms of business, which are exactly of this kind. In this kind of gambling thousands of millions of dollars are every year invested. Fortunes are won and lost as idle youths win cents or dollars at poker or at horse-races. And as chances within a very limited

space or time are wholly incalculable, every gambler is sorely tempted, and far beyond the power of human nature to resist, to load the dice—to lie and cheat, to invent false reports, to circulate dishonest and unfounded rumors, and so to make a fortune out of covetousness and credulity. Now, let us clearly understand that no matter how large the fortune a man may accumulate by transactions of this kind, no matter what good use he may be supposed to make of his money, no matter what his name or position in society, he is purely and simply a gambler. His business, if we may so abuse the word, is in its very nature incurably dishonest, and no tricks of sophistry can by any possibility clear it of fraud.

And as we perceive that this is gambling by merely inspecting its nature, so we might guess that it was gambling by observing its effects. If a clerk in your store embezzles fifty dollars, what is your immediate and instinctive suspicion? You will instantly suspect, and you will almost always be right in the suspicion, that he has lost money by gambling. And if the cashier of a bank embezzles fifty thousand dollars, what is our immediate and instinctive suspicion about him? What are the first questions we ask? Where do the detectives look for an explanation of his villainy, or for the stolen property some portion of which they may hope to recover? They always look to the stock exchange. They always try to find out through what broker he has been speculating. And they almost always discover that that was at the bottom of his misfortunes and the root of his crimes.

And now, *young* men, let me address a few fatherly counsels separately to you. If you have acquired the

habit of betting, believe me it would have been far better for you if you had acquired the habit of taking slow poison. There is one end, and one end *only*, before you, from which nothing but a very miracle of divine grace can save you, and that end is infamy and a jail. When you are as old as I am and have seen as much of the world, your memory will be haunted forever by wan faces, haggard with misery and despair, gazing upon you through prison-bars. There will ring forever in your ears the wailing of heartbroken wives and beggared children—men and women and children whom gambling has brought to ruin. Never bet; never, whether in jest or earnest, whether much or little; never, as you value your own prospects in life, your reputation, your peace of conscience, the tender affection of those whose happiness is bound up in yours; never, as you love God or hope for Heaven.

And when so large and important a part of the "business" of a country is not business at all, but a series of transactions of a kind which no possible adroitness can make honest, need we wonder that men pass so rapidly from the fraud which is respectable and condoned, to that vulgar thieving which, if only it be detected, is punished by a universal execration? Every one of us remembers how but a few months ago the whole civilized world stood aghast at the colossal iniquities of a firm to which one of the most illustrious of our citizens had been persuaded to give the sanction of his name; but to which, unfortunately for those who trusted him, it was impossible for him to give the protection of any personal knowledge and superintendence. None of us can have forgotten how, week after week and almost day after day, bank after bank crashed down—not through the inevitable misfortunes

or incalculable uncertainties of a very complicated business, but through sheer dishonesty and vulgar thieving. And now, within the last few days and in exactly the same way, another bank has gone, the National Bank of New Jersey. Of course it is the old story. Directors of the utmost respectability have done everything that could possibly have been expected of them—except direct. They had rendered the required reports and sworn the necessary oaths as to the bank's liabilities and assets, and the only thing that they had omitted to do was to ascertain by personal inspection that the assets did really exist. And so, one morning, they learn to their amazement and horror that the cashier of their bank is dead; and now, at last, they begin for the first time thoroughly to discharge their obvious and most rudimentary duties. The strong-boxes are set before them for actual inspection, and alas! they find that the negotiable securities have vanished and that the boxes are made heavy by parcels of worthless brown paper. And then, to complete the tragedy, the manager of the bank, a man of hitherto unblemished reputation, by a ghastly suicide, follows the self-murdered cashier to an untimely and dishonoured grave.

And this brings me to consider that epidemic of murder and suicide from which the country is suffering almost as severely as from the epidemic of fraud. We look back with horror and amazement on that bloody penal code of England by which, only a few generations ago, any one of many scores of offenses might have brought a man to the gallows. We cannot understand how a brave and high-spirited people could have borne to live under a tyranny so intolerable. But after

all there is something to be said for even these sanguinary laws. At the very least they *were* laws. They had been handed down as a part of the common law of the land from immemorial time, or they had been enacted in open Parliament. Moreover, they were administered in courts of justice according to definite rules of procedure and a most stringent law of evidence. The meanest culprit accused of any of these offenses was tried by a jury of his peers; and, if convicted, his sentence was executed by the appointed officers of the State. But the laws under which many of our fellow-citizens are living are independent alike of Congress and of courts. They are neither common law nor statute law. They are enacted for each separate occasion, not by the representatives of the people, but by the brutal passion of an individual; and they are executed by a private citizen or by a mob. What offense is there, in one part of this country or another, which is not a capital crime? Does a man "bite his thumb" at you?—then, like any Montague or Capulet, you draw your rapier upon him or shoot him dead on the spot. Does the editor of a newspaper criticise the public action of a State or municipal officer? does a young woman refuse the unwelcome addresses of a too-persistent suitor? does a lawyer obtain a judgment for his client against the defendant in the suit?—then for any one of these offenses the unhappy culprit, without judge or jury, may be done to death. And do we flatter ourselves that these are only the brutal crimes of vulgar ruffians? *Such* crimes, indeed, are frequent enough, not only in this country, but in all other countries; but I do not regard *them* as symptoms of the epidemic. The crimes I speak of were committed by

men moving in what is called good society—by editors of newspapers—by ex-judges of courts of law—by attorneys actually practising in those courts. They were committed, that is to say, by men whose very office it was to be the guides and instructors of their fellow-citizens; who were the sworn representatives and administrators of the law of the land. And the criminals were not hooted into obscurity, or hanged up by their necks till they were dead, but they were welcomed back among their old associates, and not seldom with the shouts of applauding congratulations. Whole cities and whole districts condoned their crimes; and proclaimed to the world that, for them at least, law had given place to anarchy and chaos had come back again. And suicide, all the country over, among men and among women and in all classes of society, has become far more common than even murder. Men are sinking into an abject and contemptible cowardice. They seem unable to bear even the commonest calamities of life. An insult, a disappointment in love, the loss of a few hundreds or thousands of dollars, the death of a friend, the pain of a sickness, only a few days ago even the inconvenience of the heat—any one of these trifling troubles is sufficient, and the miserable poltroon seeks relief and rest in the dishonoured grave of a suicide.

Such, then, is the epidemic; and now I want us carefully to consider what it means; what we ourselves have to do with it; from what infected port it comes; how we may guard ourselves against the infection; and how, if possible, we may stamp it out. Of one thing, at any rate, we may be certain—namely, that it is an *effect*; and inasmuch as it is so conspicuous and

even terrific a phenomenon, it is of the utmost possible importance that we should ascertain its cause. And there is another way in which we may regard it. We are here this morning in a Christian church, and not one of us can pretend to regard the existence of God or His personal government of the world as an open question. We are absolutely certain that the uniformity of nature is a clear manifestation of His will; and that consequents follow antecedents because He will have it so. Hence we may regard *every* phenomenon, and especially the great crises, as we call them, of human life and history, as a divine judgment. We observe, and meditate, and reason, and form opinions and rules of life; we behave ourselves in this way or that; we acknowledge God, or we deny Him; we are irreverent or devout; we set before ourselves *pleasure* as the great end of life, or we recognize the infinite and eternal difference between *right* and *wrong*, and aim at an ideal perfection. We devote ourselves to money-making, or to science, or to art, or to benevolence, or to the direct service of Almighty God; and *something or other* comes of it. If a whole nation devotes itself, almost exclusively, to some one particular course of conduct, founded upon the growing and, at last, widespread conviction of the truth of certain doctrines or theories, then what comes of *that* is a peculiar national character, accompanied by a corresponding happiness or misery, elevation or degradation, honour or infamy, honesty or fraud, selfish violence or reverence for law, manly and robust courage or imbecility and cowardice. When, then, we consider the actual condition of a nation, its character and its conduct, with their corresponding effects, we may most

confidently affirm that, in this vast and complicated phenomenon, God is declaring to us His judgment in a voice as loud and penetrating as that which sounded forth from the fire and darkness of Sinai. He is saying to us: That is what *I* think, *I*, the Almighty God, about your ways of living, and your opinions, and your theories. I work by laws; I leave you, for the most part, to reward or punish yourselves. *Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.* Now behold the harvest, and remember that *that* is my judgment of the seed, and of the soil, and of your husbandry. *This* judgment of mine is not written in a book; it is open to no sort of disputing; it depends upon no minute criticism, within the reach only of the learned, about text or authorship or date. There it lies, before the face of every human being, man, woman and child, not only plain to see, but impossible to remain unseen. I have permitted you to work out your own problem, and *this* is your own solution of it. And now, once more I say to you, not simply out of the Bible, but out of the book of actual experience and undeniable fact: *See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil;* and even yet, if you will be wise and consider your ways, it may be possible for you to *choose life, that both you and your seed may live.* *This* is some part of what God seems to be saying to us in the demoralization of our country.

We must never forget that our *living* comes out of our *thinking*, our conduct out of our belief. Sane men—and mere wickedness is no proof of insanity—do not allow themselves to *drift* along the stream of life; they row, they steer, they make for some definite landing-place; and this purpose and effort of theirs is

the practical expression and natural consequence of some opinion, conviction, belief. They are sure that at that particular landing-place their business lies; and that rowing and steering are absolutely necessary, if in their boat they are to come thither. Now, we all perfectly well know what is the Christian theory of life. Christianity teaches us that it is absolutely necessary that, above all other things, and at any possible or conceivable cost, we must submit ourselves to the holy will of God. If we do this we shall find in the very *doing* of it, and in all its consequences, the utmost blessedness of which human nature is capable. We must do this, moreover, because not only during this life, but also when this life is ended, *God will bring every work into judgment and every secret thing.* By a natural impulse of piety, and also that we may keep ever in our minds our absolute dependence upon God, and never for a moment forget that we must obey His will, and do our very utmost to ascertain what that will is, we shall approach Him continually in humble and reverent prayer; we shall lose no opportunity of receiving and imparting instruction as to His nature and His commandments; we shall make our religion a plain and palpable fact, visible and audible to the eyes and ears of all men; we shall not perform in a corner those religious duties which are essential to the very life, not only of ourselves, but of society and all mankind. We shall unite ourselves with the people of God; we shall build churches, and diligently, regularly and habitually worship in them; we shall do everything that we possibly can do to enforce upon our only too treacherous memories, and bring home to the conviction of all around us, that

religion is the *one great fact, the one high privilege, the one all-embracing duty of man.*

This is the Christian theory of life by which all those nations that we call Christian nations have lived for centuries. Of course, men are inconsistent; they are sometimes better, and very often immeasurably worse, than their beliefs or creeds. Nevertheless, their very inconsistencies, or at least the consequences which flow from them, will compel them to realize what their beliefs actually are. To act inconsistently with what we do not believe produces, directly, no effect upon us whatever. We are not happier, as we should be if we had risen above our creed; nor are we more miserable, as we should be if we had fallen consciously below it. Our inconsistency produces in us neither shame nor remorse, nor fear nor apprehension. Does, then, the inconsistent conduct of Christian men and women leave them in this condition of mere apathy and indifference? Every one of you knows absolutely from your own personal experience that *it does not*. Sin you may, and do; but you cannot sin without shame and remorse, and a sure foreboding of a divine judgment, and a massive and pervasive misery that destroys the whole peace of your life. So long as we retain our belief in the Christian theory of life, these consequences will never fail to flow from it; and therefore the Christian theory of life, in spite of all our inconsistencies, will keep a firm hold upon us, will check and restrain us when we are tempted to do wrong—will, almost imperceptibly, refine and elevate our very ideal of living, and save us from that groveling baseness which is content with a merely material happiness. When, then, we see with our own eyes

and know in our innermost lives the rigorous necessity which has hitherto bound together the Christian theory of life with the strongest incentives to virtue and the most effective restraints upon vice, we might well regard with the very liveliest and most terrified apprehension any systematic and skilfully-conducted attempt to destroy this Christian theory, and to substitute in the place of it a theory not only different, but its absolute and irreconcilable contradictory. If the Christian theory of life has tended to virtue, has bestowed upon man a noble ideal, has enabled him to curb his most impetuous passions, has cultivated within him all that is sweetest and most gracious in temper and feeling, has given him so sublime a courage that he would never hesitate a moment, for the sake of the divine life within him, to sacrifice, if it must be so, even the life of the body, what, then, could possibly come of it if this theory should become utterly repudiated, if it should be treated persistently with arrogant contempt, if men should be induced to believe that it is an obsolete and mischievous delusion, if they could be persuaded that there is no God, no soul, no immortality, no judgment to come? What, I say, *could possibly* come of this but an epidemic of fraud and vice, of brutal violence and abject cowardice?

And now let me ask you what is the most popular literature of the day, that which is most powerfully affecting our living and our thinking—and especially our thinking? Nobody can by any possibility be in doubt as to the answer. It is the literature of science; and this literature now constitutes a vast library; it is read by thousands; it is talked about by tens of thousands; it is copied into magazines and

newspapers; it is the subject of universal conversation; it is popularized in lectures; and in a very diluted form it has filtered down through all the strata of society even to the very lowest. And, more than this—I had almost said *most of all*—it is the fertile mother of useful arts; it has multiplied ten thousand-fold the material comforts and conveniences of life. On this side it not only seems to be, but it is, a brilliant success; it has more than fulfilled its most dazzling promises; and so the world compares it scornfully with religion and with the higher philosophy. It is identified with success and progress: it is supposed to deal, not with words, but with things; not with vague intuitions, but with demonstrable laws; not with another world, but with the very world we live in; not with philosophical theories, but with visible, audible, tangible, ponderable realities.

But I propose nothing so ludicrously superfluous as a laboured eulogium of science, or of the literature of science. Much more to the purpose will it be to remind you that there is very much in this literature of science which neither is nor pretends to be scientific; and it is precisely this part of that literature with which I am immediately concerned. This unscientific teaching is merely parenthetical and irrelevant; it concerns itself, not with phenomena—which are the true and only sphere of the physical sciences—but with those ultimate questions which belong, not to physical science, but to philosophy. It matters nothing to science whether or not there may *really be* an external world, so long as there *seems to be one*, and so long as the endless series of appearances are capable of being arranged in a definite order in time and space.

It matters nothing to science whether or not there may have been a primary cause of that matter and force which constitute the universe, so long as the universe itself exists, or *seems* to exist. It matters nothing whatever to science whether or not there may be, behind the gray matter of the brain and the nervous ganglia, and the various tissues of which our bodily organism is made up, a mysterious personality, a living being who can call himself "*I*," and who is conscious of an unchanged identity in the midst of all the growth and decay of his bodily structure; this, I say, matters nothing whatever so long as the anatomist, physiologist, or biologist can dissect the material structure, and ascertain its modes of growth and the functions of its several organs. When, then, our great leaders in science discuss these mysterious problems; when they inquire about the existence of God, or the nature of the soul, or the freedom of the will, or the difference between right and wrong, they are then entering upon speculations which are indeed profoundly interesting to all thoughtful people. But here, also, we must never forget that they are not upon their own ground; their authority as skilful and wellnigh infallible investigators of phenomena will here avail them absolutely nothing. The fact that they are "scientists" will rather beget the suspicion that they may be disqualified for the investigations of the metaphysician or the theologian. For the powers of the human mind, though indefinite, are very far from infinite; and intellectual operations, no less than those which are purely mechanical, can be performed successfully and on a large and thorough scale only by a division of labour. It is notorious that very few persons indeed

have attained to the highest eminence *both* in classics and mathematics; and it is very far from being *a priori* certain that the man who has a natural preference for the study of the amœbus will also be in the highest degree qualified for the study of the human mind. I am not, therefore, concerned with what is purely scientific in the popular literature. I care nothing whatever whether heat be or be not a mode of motion, and whether or not the various forces of the universe be inexplicably interchangeable. I am concerned only with those moral, theological, philosophical speculations which are inserted, as it were, parenthetically in our books of science; and I want especially to impress upon you the fact that it is sheer delusion to suppose that these speculations or theories derive the slightest possible importance from the mere fact that they are propounded by distinguished men, whose *authority* belongs to a very different, and indeed widely dissimilar, department of observation and experiment.

What, then, is the new theory of life which is to supersede the Christian, and which obtains a delusive authority from the fact that its chief apostles are the very men who, though by no means distinguished as theologians and metaphysicians, really are and deserve to be distinguished for attainments in a wholly different region of speculation? Christianity affirms that there is a God, and that we can and do know Him; the new gospel affirms that we *do not* and *cannot* know that there is a God, or, if there be a God, know anything of His nature and attributes. Christianity affirms that each human being is a living person, capable of determining his own actions and responsible for them. The new gospel teaches us that our mental operations

—including love, hope, fear, reverence, will, and the like—are mere functions of the nervous system, depending absolutely upon our physical structure, coming when it comes and going when it goes. The freedom of the will is mere illusion, and would be equally believed by a tree or a stone if only they were possessed of consciousness. The ultimate analysis of right and wrong reduces them to a particular kind of pleasure and pain. Inasmuch as our intellectual and spiritual life is a mere function of the nervous system, which is disintegrated and decomposed at death, there can be no personal immortality and no future judgment. In a single sentence, inverting a far nobler revelation, our new evangelists have abolished life and brought death and mortality to light by science.

I do not propose to argue the truth or untruth of these propositions, though I have not a single atom of doubt that they are palpably and demonstrably and even absurdly untrue. Their untruth is proved by a mere inspection—a careful and thorough inspection—of our own experience. One of the ultimate postulates of science, for instance, is the existence of *force*. But what do we really know of force? How could we arrive at the mere notion of force by the observation of phenomena? What we see is *change*, not the *causes* of change. Nevertheless we cannot help assuming that every change is brought about by what we call a cause, by some manifestation of force. Where do we get this notion? We get it from the experience of that force which is within us—the force which we call our will. We are conscious of ourselves exerting power, and nothing can deprive us of that consciousness. The force of Nature is a mere personification; the

force of will is the ultimate reality. So again I am perfectly well aware that what is called Utilitarianism has been modified and refined until it has contradicted itself into nothing. The older and more consistent Utilitarians admitted that the only difference between one pleasure and another is a difference of *quantity*. Mr. J. S. Mill insists upon a difference of *kind*. But a difference of kind involves the old moral distinctions. I must be told that *I ought* to prefer one *kind* of pleasure to another—general to particular, permanent to transitory, intellectual to animal.

But, as I said just now, I am not arguing the truth or untruth of these propositions. I only want to impress upon you that they are not only different from Christianity, but wholly contradictory and exclusive of it. If I believe *these* I must reject *that*—not in petty details, not giving up a miracle here and a dogma there, but I must reject it wholly, from bottom to top and all through. Not one single doctrine or fact will be left, and the whole superstructure of life which I have built upon the Christian theory must utterly vanish. Nor this only: it must be superseded by its exact opposite.

And now let us test by these new principles the conduct of the unhappy cashier of the National Bank of New Jersey. What was to him the greatest happiness of life? Let us assume that it was to accumulate a fortune. To promote in that way his highest happiness was but the new method of discharging his duty, and that duty he diligently discharged. We may imagine a moralist like Mr. J. S. Mill expostulating with him, urging upon him that the serenity of a good conscience, and the welfare of his neighbours, and the

permanence of society, and the stability of business, were higher objects than his own selfish enjoyment. But how superlatively easy would have been his reply! He would have answered: "You are still in the darkness and bondage of the old superstition. I have forgotten what you mean by the serenity of a good conscience. I know of no authority by which I can be compelled to sacrifice my own happiness to the happiness of other people. Even in mere quantity I believe that I am increasing the sum of general happiness by making money, even though I have to lie and steal to do it. I know that it will make *me* supremely happy, and it will not make supremely miserable those whom I must plunder. They are, many of them, what you call good men. They will regard their losses as a divine and merciful discipline. They will pray over them. They will put them to their credit in their account with another world. Each one of them will lose a comparatively very small sum—say a few hundreds or even thousands of dollars: I shall secure half a million. Go, my good friend, and preach to the people who have not thoroughly studied your own principles; I am proof against fanaticism."

Or he might have taken another ground. He might have said: "Why do you expect me to suffer shame or remorse? You know perfectly well that I *could not* avoid what I did. My nature was born with me. I inherited this love of money, this indifference to what you call honesty. Moreover, I *could not possibly* resist the strongest motive. Do you say I ought to have put myself under different influences or removed myself from irresistible temptation? You know you are talking nonsense. *How* could I *choose* to do what I

entirely and passionately disliked? My desires are as truly necessary and inevitable as the actions which spring out of them.”

And when the dreadful end had come—when his life was wrecked and his happiness departed; when his frauds were detected and nothing lay before him but execration and the jail—then we may be sure he would know how to apply the soothing doctrines of his new religion. He had no God to fear or future judgment. Life was no longer worth living; why, then, live on? Why not blow out the candle, and pass away into the utter nothingness—without pain or memory, remorse or foreboding—of everlasting darkness? Assuredly this unhappy self-murderer was a model saint of the new religion and church of rational belief.

You will not imagine for a moment, my dear friends, that I shall close this discourse without a direct appeal to your own consciences. I want you to ask yourselves what you are doing to stamp out this epidemic, to protect yourselves from its infection. Nay, rather, I beseech you to ask yourselves what you are doing to spread it and to make it more virulent and fatal. Believe me, the most vigorous seeds can only grow luxuriantly in a fertile and prepared soil; and atheism and vice can only grow luxuriantly in a soil enriched by the dead leaves of a decaying piety. I have reminded you what the Christian theory of life really is. Life must be based upon religion and everywhere governed by it. Religion is *everything—everything* of privilege and of duty—*everything* for the individual and society. And because it is everything for society, and we are a part of society and cannot stand alone, therefore we must not only learn, but teach; not only

believe, but testify. We must unite ourselves with the people of God; we must build churches and worship in them; our religion must be a palpable and visible reality, not only a private devotion, a mystic, hidden rapture. I shall say nothing of your private godliness, of which God only and yourselves can judge. But of your *public godliness*, your testifying to the truth, your example to others—not in commercial integrity and domestic affection and personal culture, but in the direct and open recognition of Almighty God by common prayer and praise, by diligence in receiving religious instruction and the public means of grace—of this everybody can judge, and everybody does judge. And what is it that the world sees and says? The very simplest and most rudimentary and easiest of our *public* religious duties is a regular attendance at the house of God. Churches are open every Sunday—nay, every day of the week—but in how many places scarcely anybody can be induced to enter them? Perhaps on Sunday morning a church may be full, especially if the music be good and the preaching not intolerable; but in the evening Christian men and women are conspicuously absent. The weather makes no difference to merchants and clerks, shopkeepers and school-teachers, theatres and drinking-saloons; but for hundreds of professing Christians it is nearly always either too hot or too cold, too dusty or too damp, to go to church. And what does the world say of it all? It says that we are miserable hypocrites; that we do not believe what we pretend to believe; that our religion is a mere fashion, one of the proprieties of the set we belong to. The world says that our religion is not a delight, but a dismal necessity; not a willing service,

but a hard bargain ; not a food, but a medicine ; not a rest, but a fatigue.

Alas! it is only too possible that I am speaking to you in vain—that you will not heed me. You will *hear my words, but you will not do them.* You will let the world go its own way for you, and the epidemic of fraud and violence spread, for you, unchecked. But at least I have done something to unburden my own conscience. And once again I say to you : *See! I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil; wherefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live. The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

THE EFFECTS OF AN EXCLUSIVE OR DIS-
PROPORTIONATE STUDY OF THE PHY-
SICAL SCIENCES ON RELIGIOUS BELIEF.*

*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.
If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in
him.*—I. JOHN ii. 15.†

I propose, in this sermon, to make a special applica-
tion of the words of S. John which, at first sight, may
seem to many a little too remote. The word here
translated *world* is one which has long since been
naturalized in the English language; it is the word
Kosmos. It stands, in modern thought, for all the
phenomena of the universe regarded as a whole;
capable of scientific arrangement by co-ordination or
subordination; as coexistent in space or successive in
time; as invariable antecedents or invariable conse-
quents; parts of an order and capable of being
described metaphorically as subject to laws. This
meaning of the word has not, indeed, been altogether
stable. But in its latest usage it would exclude any-
thing which cannot be regarded as a phenomenon and
accounted for by an antecedent, even though such
things might conceivably or really exist in the domain
of Being. It takes the universe as already existing,
with its matter and movement; and it does not take
into account any cause by which that universe may

* This sermon was not preached.

† Μη ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. εἴαν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν
κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.

have been brought into existence, nor any possible future which may succeed when the existing order of Nature shall have come to an end. It does not deny God, but omits Him; nor can it easily find room, if at all, for the human will or the human conscience. Unspeakably beautiful and wonderful it may be; but it is "without father, without mother, without beginning of days or end of years." It is the object-matter not of theology, or metaphysics, or ethics, but of the physical sciences. Of such a Kosmos it seems to me emphatically true that "if any man," with an exclusive or disproportionate affection, "love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

But there may seem something of irreverence in using a passage of Scripture, as we might use a felicitous quotation from Shakespeare, for the purpose of obtaining a perhaps fictitious sanction for our own speculations. When we are examining the words of an inspired Apostle, our first object should be to ascertain, if we can, their exact and primary meaning. That meaning, however, will not simply be a barren assertion, a proposition or series of propositions from which, when combined with other truths, no further inferences can be drawn. But logical inferences are one thing, and mere artificial attachments are another. If, then, we are justified in affirming of the Kosmos of science what S. John affirms of the "world" which he really had in his mind, we must be able to show that there is a real analogy between the two, and that, by the very nature of the case, the love of the one will exclude the "love of the Father" as really, and in very much the same way, as the love of the other. In other words, the legitimate application of the text must be preceded

by a careful and accurate exegesis. In this way, too, we shall best satisfy the claims not only of reverence, but of logic.

It seems, then, that S. John has in his mind those three real and distinct objects which are the necessary conditions of all genuine religion: God, who is the Object of religion; the spirit of man, which is its subject; and the world, which is at once the sphere of its operations and the tools or implements by which it works. The first we know by conscience, the second by consciousness, the third by observation and experiment. Our primary knowledge of God is complemented by revelation; of ourselves by philosophy; of the world by scientific method. But the three remain ever distinct; they are fundamental facts which cannot be resolved into simpler elements, or combined in a higher unity. In relation to God and man the world is, in itself, *morally* indifferent, being incapable alike of virtue or vice, right or wrong, order or disorder. It is what it was made. But it has been made so rich and beautiful, its arrangements are so stable and trustworthy, its variety is so incalculable, that "God saw all that He had made, and God said it is very good." If we were not, as we know ourselves in simple fact to be, in a condition of moral and spiritual debasement, we should inhabit this glorious world with innocence, and joy, and ever-deepening gratitude, as God's "dear children." We should never separate it in our thoughts from His generous love; as it would be the sphere, so it would be the perpetual incentive, of our happy and grateful service.

But that union with God which is the highest blessedness for man has been broken and disturbed; nay,

so serious is the alienation that it seems to us, too often, natural, nor wholly to be regretted. We rather hide from God than seek Him; and, with an awful presentiment that He has abandoned us as we have forsaken Him, we try to "do without Him." We say, "Is not our 'Garden of Eden' as delightful as ever, though God walks and talks with us no more? Nay, left to ourselves and untroubled by the fear of forbidden fruit, may we not adapt it more completely to our purpose?" So we look at the world *apart* from God, as a property of our own which we may use without responsibility and without restraint. By an inevitable process of impiety we sooner or later substitute it for God. Then, haunted by sad memories or gloomy forebodings, we do all we can to exclude God from it. We deliberately set ourselves in defiance to His authority, and seek for happiness in reckless disobedience and in following "the devices and desires of our own hearts." Thus the very word "world" is a condensed history of human degradation. It stands first for that orderly and beautiful system of Nature and of human society which God created and ordained for our use and our enjoyment and our spiritual perfecting. Then it stands for that Nature and society apart from God, then alienated from Him, then hostile to Him. And as hostility can exist only in persons, and not in the mere things by which they are surrounded, the "world" comes to mean that innumerable multitude of human beings who love God no longer, and who order their lives with no regard to His commandments or His will. God, indeed, has not abandoned those who have forsaken Him. Age after age He has sent them His messages by lawgivers and

prophets: in "the fulness of the times" by His "well-beloved Son"; since His ascension by the Apostles of Christ, the "ministers and stewards of His mysteries," the "Holy Church throughout all the world." But how incalculably remote, even now, seems the time when "the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ"! And in the days of S. John how "little" must have seemed "the flock" which had been gathered out of the world into the divine Family, "the kingdom of heaven"! With scarcely an exaggeration he could say: "We know that the whole world lieth in wickedness"; and he knew well how difficult it would be to protect the ransomed few from the terrible and subtle dangers by which they were surrounded; from the fascination of external temptations, and the fickleness and treachery of their own hearts; "from the *crafts* and *assaults* of the devil."

The "world," then, which S. John had in his mind was the great world of Rome, with the Emperor as its autocrat and the chief god of its religion. Remembering who and what the Emperors were—for is it not written in the pages of Tacitus and Suetonius?—such a religion seems to us so monstrously absurd that, in defiance of the most conclusive evidence, we can scarcely believe that it ever existed. But not only were the Emperors gods themselves, but they were able to make other gods and command and secure their worship. The foulness of Roman vice, especially in high places, by its utter baseness baffles all description; but I may tell a small part of the story of Antinous from the unromantic and decorous prose of Smith's *Dictionary*: "On account of his extraordinary beauty he was taken

by the Emperor Hadrian to be his page, and soon became the object of his extravagant affection. Hadrian took him with him on all his journeys. It was in the course of one of these that he was drowned in the Nile. It is uncertain whether his death was accidental, or whether he threw himself into the river, either from disgust at the life he led, or from a superstitious belief that by so doing he could avert some calamity from the Emperor. . . . The grief of the Emperor knew no bounds. . . . He enrolled Antinous amongst the gods, caused temples to be erected to him in Egypt and Greece, and statues of him to be set up in almost every part of the world." Compared with such an apotheosis, the worship of a common harlot might have boasted a kind of chaste propriety. But in the worship of the Emperors—distorted, indeed, and even suicidal though it was—there was yet one element of nobleness. It was the expression of the majesty of Rome, the sacredness of law, possibly also the "solidarity" of those various "nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues" which the imperial power had welded into one. But the numerous other religions, native and imported, which were tolerated by Roman law, seem to have been an unmitigated and incurable evil.* The worship of the Corinthian Aphrodite, for instance, was a mere consecrated

* The religion of the Jews, *as known to the Romans*, was scarcely an exception. It was a kind of magic united with every sort of mendicancy and fraud. Cf. Juvenal, vi., 542-547 :

Quum dedit ille locum, cophino foenoque relicto
 Arcanam Iudæa tremens mendicat in aurem,
 Interpres legum Solymarum et magna sacerdos
 Arboris ac summi fida internuntia cæli ;
 Implet et illa manum, sed parcus ; ære minuto
 Qualiacunque voles Iudæi somnia vendunt.

harlotry; and almost every city was narcotized or intoxicated by a not dissimilar poison. Well indeed might S. John say to his "little children": *Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

Now, if this be a true exposition, however brief, of the words of S. John, I think that in applying them to the subject I have in hand I am moving on parallel lines, am justified by a strict analogy, am availing myself of logical inferences which are neither invalid nor too remote. For it seems to me that the progress of modern science—by which hereafter, in this sermon, I shall mean *physical science*, as distinguished from metaphysics, or philosophy, or theology—has corresponded almost exactly to the moral development or corruption of mankind. First of all, for the purpose of easier examination, science has investigated the Kosmos *apart from God*. And this manifestly, in itself, involves no impiety. The world is what it is, whoever made it, or however it came into existence; and, in the most religious spirit, we may try to discover exactly what the environment is in which we are placed, in order that we may with due humility accommodate ourselves to it, and make the best possible use of it. But even in this first stage the study of Nature (apart from God) must be highly dangerous, and may easily be fatal to religious belief and religious feeling, unless we combine with it in a sufficient degree other studies which do *not* omit God from our consideration; and unless we carefully discharge the practical duties of religion. To devote all our best energies to the discovery of what the world is *with God left out*, is the most effective method of forgetting Him altogether,

and prepares us, with the utmost ease, for the next stage in the progress of modern science.

That next stage is the investigation of the world *with God excluded*. Science set out upon her path of discovery inevitably with the traditional belief that the phenomena of Nature were always beneficently superintended by a Divine Providence, and sometimes controlled by miraculous interposition. At first, therefore, she was timid; not alone because she had to encounter a universal prejudice, but because she herself had not wholly got rid of it. But she gained courage as she proceeded. Investigating those phenomena which are given to us by the senses, and arranged and classified by the intellect—which is her proper and chosen province—she was everywhere successful. *God* is not perceived by the senses, nor out of sensible materials can the intellect construct Him. But that ambition of the human spirit which science affects to deride can never be really eradicated. If it be checked or stopped on positive lines, it will move with restless energy on negative lines; if it may not prove that *God is*, it will insist on demonstrating that *He is not*. To science, properly so called—viz.: the methodical investigation of phenomena *presented by the senses*—Theism and Atheism are alike indifferent; you cannot affirm what does or does not exist in that very region from which you have deliberately retired, and which you have deliberately chosen to leave unexplored. But a man does not cease to be a man because he is a student of natural science. The thought of God will keep recurring to him; and when it comes it has a kind of majesty, a loftiness of demand, which cannot at once be set aside. Nor can it be set aside at all, within

the domain of science, by any *positive* disproof; the utmost that can be accomplished is to get rid of it by a long series of exclusions. The scientist,* were he ever so well inclined, cannot for the life of him discover *how to get that God in again* whom, or which, he deliberately and provisionally *left out* for the sake of an easier investigation of natural and sensible phenomena. Omitting the consideration of *cause*—which, I may here remark, is a purely metaphysical conception—he has been dealing solely with invariable *antecedents*; and he has in every case found as many of them as he wants. Take the case, for instance, of an abundant wheat-harvest. That is a palpable physical fact; the yield can be weighed and measured, and will be found so many bushels to the acre. What are the antecedents? A well-selected locality, with reasonable certainty of sufficient warmth and moisture; soil well tilled and richly manured; sound wheat for seed; the ordinary operations of sowing and ingathering. “Now, at what stage of this process,” asks the triumphant or despairing scientist, as his mood may be, “am I to insert a beneficent Providence, the direct action of a merciful God?” Or take the case of an ill-regulated family. They live in an ill-constructed house, and they care nothing for cleanliness or ventilation. They allow the very products of disease to poison the water they drink, or float freely in the air they breathe. These minute but living organisms—if that be a true hypothesis—take possession of their bodies, and grow there like wheat in a field, only with enormously greater rapidity and fecundity. The family is smitten down by disease

* I know no substitute, short of a tedious circumlocution, for this detestable hybrid.

and most of them die. Where, again, in *this* process, are we to insert a righteous and avenging God? And when the theologian or the metaphysician insists upon His recognition, the scientist becomes impatient and exasperated, and haughtily thrusts Him out; for if He were admitted He would be a new antecedent and must certainly alter the *resultant* of all the rest. And, inasmuch as *the very province* of science is the phenomenal world and nothing else, he is precluded, as scientist, from the assumption that the place of God may be at the head of, and outside of, *the whole series*; and, also, that the processes of Nature may have a moral purpose. For morality, *right* and *wrong*, are not within the scope of physics: they cannot be weighed and measured, or in any other way, by means of the intellect making use of the materials furnished by the senses, scientifically verified. Surely, even at this stage, it must be said of the scientist, *as* scientist, that "the love of the Father is not in him." The very conception of a "Father" has been obliterated, or is resented as an unnecessary and impertinent intrusion.

And now I come to the third stage in the progress of modern science in relation to religious belief. At this stage those faculties of human beings which were set aside as useless for merely scientific investigation—viz., conscience and will—demand to be reinstated, or at least to be recognized, and if possible explained. Nay, even the senses and the intellect insist upon being accounted for. The hungry vacuum left by the exclusion of God can no longer be allowed to remain unfilled. Science, therefore, must include *its own instruments* among the phenomena to be investigated, and thus deprive itself of the very means by which its investiga-

tions can be carried on. It must fill up the clamorous *vacuum* by its own products. It becomes, therefore, anthropomorphic: it invests its own generalizations with personality; it fills up the enormous gaps in its verified discoveries with bold hypotheses. This is the third and last stage of science, and also its Nemesis. For, under the disguise of science, it has reinstated—though in a mutilated, self-contradictory, and practically worthless form—those very conceptions which it had passionately affirmed were based upon transparent and discreditable fallacies. The three stages, then, of the progress of science in relation to religious belief are these: The investigation of Nature, *first*, with *God left out*; *second*, with *God excluded*; *third*, with *the place of God occupied by anthropomorphic personifications and unverifiable hypotheses*. Of this last stage the recent work of Dr. Henry Maudsley, entitled *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*, is, so far as my reading in that direction extends, the most conspicuous and complete illustration. It is now a good many years since I read Mr. Tyndall's treatise on *Heat as a Mode of Motion*. I was not then, and I am not now, in the least able to criticise the wonderful series of observations and deductions by which he believes that he makes good his position. I have neither the scientific imagination to devise, nor the dexterity to perform, his very delicate experiments. I should go to Mr. Tyndall, on such subjects, as a very humble learner to an undisputed master and authority. But in dealing with motion and heat he is dealing with facts which are revealed to us by the senses, and to those facts alone he applies, for their arrangement and interpretation, his acute and penetrating intellect. I

do not remember in his book any parenthetical excursions into the realm of theology or metaphysics. It left, therefore, on my mind the impression of a purely scientific treatise of the very highest excellence, and belonging to what I have called *the first stage* in the progress of science—the study of Nature *with God left out*. And, I may add, in such a discussion the introduction of theology would have been absurdly irrelevant. On the other hand, his famous *Belfast Address* leaves on my mind a very different impression. He explicitly repudiates Atheism; but that brilliant address seems to me a conspicuous illustration of science in *its second stage*—the study of Nature *with God excluded*. I derive, I think, the same impression from Mr. Huxley's *Lay Sermon on The Physical Basis of Life*.

The effect upon religious feeling and belief of a disproportionate study of the physical sciences is, perhaps, even more disastrous upon those who study science as an amusement or fashion than upon professional scientists. For, though the former may be supposed to be less exclusive in their pursuit of science, and to have a larger number of moderating and neutralizing mental occupations, the fact is that they are generally incapable of serious and rigorous study of any kind whatever. They get their science at second or third hand, generally in a greatly diluted form. For want of the truly scientific temper their conclusions and assumptions are incalculably more rash than those of the truly competent and accomplished investigators of Nature. Moreover, the books they read, even though written by men of acknowledged scientific authority, are the books they have written in their capacity not so much of scientists as of men of letters.

Such books are the proper vehicles of mere (and acknowledged) *hypotheses*; of comparison between physical science and other branches of knowledge; of tentative suggestions, and the like. But the unpractised and unscientific reader never observes these distinctions. He does not reflect that Tyndall, writing a treatise on *Heat as a Mode of Motion* (which the scientific amateur would probably have no patience to read), is a scientist with an admirably lucid style and faculty of description; but that Tyndall, writing the *Belfast Address*, is a man of letters dealing with the history of science, with the opinions of Heraclitus and Plato and Aristotle and Epicurus and Lucretius; and with philosophical theories, such as Materialism and Atheism—all which subjects, so treated, lie entirely outside of the domain which has been deliberately selected for the investigations of physical science, properly so called. Hence the amateur gets all the disadvantages and none of the advantages—such as a rigorous and almost ascetic mental training in at least one direction—which genuine scientific research may be trusted to secure.

At any rate, whatever may be the cause, we find ourselves in a position closely resembling that—only far more serious—which Bishop Butler describes in his *Advertisement to the Analogy*. He knew, not from guess or mere assumption, but from personal experience, the attitude of society in his day towards the Christian religion. I am now quoting from Mr. Matthew Arnold's characteristic essay on *Bishop Butler and the Zeit-Geist* (pp. 251–252, Macmillan's Edition of 1883):

Society was full of discussions about religion, of objections to eternal punishment as inconsistent with the divine goodness,

and to a system of future rewards as subversive of a disinterested love of virtue. "The deistical writers," says Mr. Pattison, "formed the atmosphere which educated people breathed. The objections the *Analogy* meets are not new and unreasoned objections, but such as had worn well, and had borne the rub of controversy, because they were genuine. It was in society, and not in his study, that Butler had learned the weight of the deistical arguments."

And in a further sentence Mr. Pattison, in my opinion, has almost certainly put his finger on the very determining cause of the *Analogy's* existence: "At the Queen's philosophical parties, where these topics (the deistical objections) were canvassed with earnestness and freedom, Butler must often have felt the impotence of reply in detail, and seen, as he says, 'how impossible it must be, in a cursory conversation, to unite all into one argument, and represent it as it ought to be.'"

This connecting of the *Analogy* with the Queen's philosophical parties seems to me an idea inspired by true critical genius. The parties given by Queen Caroline—a clever and strong-minded woman—the recluse and grave Butler had, as her Clerk of the Closet, to attend regularly. Discussion was free at them, and there Butler no doubt heard in abundance the talk of what is well described as the "loose kind of deism which was the then tone of fashionable circles."

The *Analogy*, with its peculiar strain and temper, is the result. "Caviling and objecting upon any subject is much easier than clearing up difficulties; and this last part will always be put upon the defenders of religion." Surely that must be a reminiscence of the "loose kind of deism" and of its maintainers!

With this in our minds let us hear Butler himself: "It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity [in our case Theism] is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discern-

ment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world."

This is exactly where we are now, excepting—and how enormous is the exception!—that it is not *the Christian* religion, but *any* religion, not the God of the Bible, but any conceivable God, which popular literature and conversation, in certain strata, now regard as too entirely ridiculous to be even seriously argued. The clergy are supposed to be timid and sensitive, even hyperæsthetic, so I will justify my own impression by references to a book which some of my "scientific" friends assure me is "very strong," and some of my "orthodox" friends assure me—meaning the same thing—is "very dangerous": I mean Dr. Henry Maudsley's book entitled *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*.* The very title of the book is a kind of cynical assumption that all believers in the supernatural—that is to say, in anything which is not first given to us by the senses—are misled by mere "seeming." Let it be remembered that the supernatural includes Almighty God, and all the special facts upon which the Christian religion is based. If it could be *disproved*, there is an end of all religious controversy; and a serious attempt at *disproof* might be tolerated, or even in a measure admired, as a rare instance of intellectual courage. Those who think that a belief in the supernatural has done far more harm than good to the human race, are justified in trying to relieve mankind from an intolerable burden. Those who think that it has done far more good than harm, and,

* See Supplementary Note No. 2 at the end of this volume.

in the case of its most conspicuous example, the Christian religion, is doing more good now, might perhaps have been justified in letting it alone; though there may be a kind of quasi-virtue in sacrificing the well-being of humanity to scientific consistency. But the condition in which we now find ourselves is that we have to deal, not with sober argument, but with undisguised contempt.

This is the way, for instance, in which Dr. Maudsley states what he calls "the argument" of his book referred to above:

How is it that mankind, in different ages and places, from their beginning until now, have had so many different notions concerning the supernatural, if there be a supernatural with which they can come into relations of knowledge and feeling? How is it that they have had any notions at all concerning it, if there be no such accessible supernatural? Those who believe confidently that there is not, or that in any case we cannot know anything about it, ought to show how it has come to pass that people everywhere, savage, barbarous, and cultured, have been impelled to construct it in the forms in which they have constructed it; a plain scientific obligation lies on them to explain the natural origin of human belief respecting that which is beyond the reach of human thought.

And then he proceeds:

It will not be amiss to inquire and examine how far the causes of beliefs in the supernatural, and of the sundry and diverse notions that have been entertained concerning it in different times and places, can be identified with causes which are habitually working in human thought now, and which were more largely operative in its more primitive stages of development. These causes may be classed as follows:

I. Causes which lie in the natural operations of the sound mind; of which two principal divisions may properly be made—namely:

1. The natural defects and errors of human observation and reasoning.

2. The prolific activity of the imagination, always eager and pleased to exercise itself. For it ought to be well considered in this relation that, while the exercise of observation and reasoning is slow, toilsome, and difficult, the exercise of imagination is quick, easy, and pleasant; and how largely, therefore, the scanty supplies of the former are immediately supplemented by the lavish profusions of the latter.

II. Causes which lie in the operations of the unsound mind, and which fall naturally under the two principal headings of—

1. Hallucinations and illusions.

2. Mania and delusions.

III. Causes which lie in the adoption of ecstatic illumination or intuition as a special channel of supernatural knowledge.

Now, it is perfectly obvious, from this statement, that Dr. Maudsley regards the belief in the supernatural as too absurd to deserve serious argument of any kind. He regards it as a curious phenomenon in the history of human development. He accounts for it, in all cases, by the assumption of "defects and errors of human observation and reasoning"; by an illicit use of the imagination; by unsoundness or disease of the mind, indicated by hallucinations and maniacal delusions; by the voluntary production of abnormal excitement, such as ecstasy, trance, convulsions and the like. He lumps together all the absurdities and superstitions of savages, the supposed visions and revelations of Apostles and Saints, of Mohammed and Swedenborg, the miracles of our Lord, the supposed cures of medicine-men, the tricks of jugglers, omens, lucky and unlucky days, witches and witchcraft, as equal and parallel expressions of a belief in the supernatural. He says, in effect, "I can account for one after another of these by obvious physical or moral causes, chiefly disease and fraud; it

is not necessary to go through the whole list of these absurd beliefs, for that would require almost as long a time as was required for their actual development and history. But the specimens I shall select will be enough to indicate a principle. And it may be worth while to assist well-meaning fanatics to anticipate, by a voluntary surrender, the inevitable hour when science will deprive them, whether they will or no, of the very last atom of their confidence in God and religion." To be sure, he omits the crucial instances of what all Christians believe to be supernatural—the life and teaching of our Blessed Lord and of S. Paul; and this omission, though entirely fatal to his so-called "argument"—for he cannot account for the work either of Christ or S. Paul by unsoundness of mind, or mania, or fraud—we may charitably explain as a survival, however sickly and atrophied, of natural piety.

Now, in any case it is highly desirable, for clearness and accuracy of thought, and it is absolutely necessary, in consideration of the controversies in which we find ourselves engaged, that we should accurately determine what science really is; that is to say, what is its true and chosen domain, what are its instruments, and what is its method. For science is the court, so to speak, before which we are so often brought, charged with serious crimes, and weighted with a well-deserved or ill-deserved very bad reputation. It is absolutely necessary for us, then, to be accurately informed as to the jurisdiction of this court and its modes of procedure. Now, the chosen *domain* of science is *phenomena cognizable by the senses*. The *instruments* of science are *the senses* and *the intellect*, and these only; for in an investigation of a sensible

phenomenon there is no question of right or wrong, and emotion is scientifically mere surplusage, and generally a very disturbing cause of deflection or friction. The *method* of science is *observation*, and that trained observation which we call *experiment*; and the logical processes of *induction and deduction*, which are founded upon what are called the *laws of thought*, the modes in which the human mind has been found to proceed in the discovery of truth.

If this be a true account of science—meaning, of course, physical science—it is obvious that any question of the supernatural is wholly outside its domain, incapable of being solved by its instruments, and wholly alien from its methods. Let us consider these two propositions: “The will is self-determining,” and “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” How can science affirm or deny either of these propositions? The will is not cognizable by the senses; and any being who existed before the heavens and the earth, and what He did or omitted to do before the Creation, or at the moment and in the act of creation, lie wholly outside of the domain of science. To ask, then, for a *scientific* demonstration, properly so called, of the existence of God or of His attributes, is irrelevant and absurd. No doubt Christians believe in a God, that He created the world, that He sustains it, that “in Him we live and move and have our being,” that without Him the vast and complicated machinery of Nature would crash into chaos or vanish into nothing. These beliefs may be abundantly justified. But they have nothing to do, either way, with science, which never legitimately can go beyond *sensible phenomena as they are*, whether to speculate how

they came into existence, or what would follow if they should cease to be. On the other hand, there are questions which do legitimately belong to science—both to its domain, its instruments and its method—even though they may, directly or indirectly, concern our religious feeling and belief. All such questions are really determinable by Science, and her answer is conclusive and without appeal. Consider the following propositions: “The world has not existed more than six thousand years”; “The earth is an immovable sphere, and the sun and other heavenly bodies revolve around it”; “Voluntary movements of the limbs can be performed without a brain”; “It is impossible that there should be inhabited antipodes.” These propositions might be found anywhere—in the Bible (I do not mean that they are found there) or in the ravings of a maniac; but *wherever found* they are clearly within the province of science, and can be solved by its materials, its instruments, and its methods; and the solution of science is conclusive and without appeal. The real solution in the cases named above I believe to be this: The world is incalculably older than six thousand years; the earth is not an immovable sphere; the voluntary motion of an arm is impossible without a brain; there do really exist inhabited antipodes. I believe these propositions have been *conclusively proved*, whatever their effect may be, direct or indirect, upon our religious feelings and beliefs; and I believe also that that effect is *nil*.

The depressing effect, therefore, of science upon religious belief and feeling is not due to science itself, properly so called, but partly to the intellectual arrogance and haughty, extra-scientific assumptions of

scientists when they write or speak, *not* as scientists, but as metaphysicians or theologians, or men of letters—with a well-deserved but wholly irrelevant reputation derived from their scientific attainments; and partly from our own pusillanimity and disregard of the acknowledged and chosen limitations of the domain of science—chosen not by theologians, but by scientists themselves. Our proper course is to deny “the jurisdiction of the court.” What is the use of attempting to prove the existence of an object not cognizable by the senses, in a domain from which all such objects have been, for purposes of convenience and a fruitful “division of labour,” most rigorously excluded; and to prove it by *the senses*? We must habitually recognize the exceedingly limited extent of the domain of science compared with the whole domain of Being. And we must remind scientists and ourselves—who need the reminder far more seriously—that the very limitation of the domain of science is not *real* and *actual*, but only *provisional* and *theoretical*; just as a physiologist, for the better study of the human eye, might *divert his attention* from the alimentary and reproductive organs, *though they are still there*, and are so organically related to the eye that any very serious disturbance in *them* would be the destruction of *it*. We should remind Science, moreover, that even within her own chosen and limited domain she could not stir a step—could not even choose and limit her province—without instruments and assumptions of which she herself, as Science, can give no account whatever. These are, for instance, the senses, the intellect, the trustworthiness of consciousness, the veracity of memory, the validity of logical processes.

Let us begin, then, with the senses, and with the

noblest of them all—the sense of sight. It may very safely be affirmed that Science, confining herself rigorously to her own domain—objects cognizable by the senses—can no more *demonstrate* the existence of the sense of sight than she can demonstrate the existence of God. It may be urged that we can prove the existence of the sense of sight by using it; which seems like saying that we can demonstrate the existence of God by praying to Him. But Science is far too exact, dogmatic, and exacting to set about the using of anything—unless by absolute compulsion—the very existence of which is still, for her, unproved and unprovable. It is this very folly with which she is forever taunting theologians and metaphysicians. Now, how can Science by any conceivable means prove the existence of the sense of sight? Do you say by examining an eye? But how can she examine an eye without seeing it? If she could *borrow* for the purpose an eye *with a human mind, so to speak, behind it*, she certainly might examine the visible phenomena of any number of other eyes. But *an eye* is not *the sense* of sight: it is only *the organ* of that sense, and does not contain it, or explain it, or suggest it. We may examine an eye from the outside, we may look at it more closely by means of an ophthalmoscope, we may take it out of the socket and dissect it. But, do what we will, we never get *to the sense of sight itself*. If there were anybody behind looking through it, he might perhaps understand that the eye is a singularly beautiful optical instrument; but what is the precise relation of *the nerves* of the eye to *vision*, and why the same purpose should not be answered by the nerves of the little toe, we know no more than an Indian savage; and there is not the

slightest reason to suppose that by physical investigation we ever shall know. And exactly the same may be said—*mutatis mutandis*—of every other sense. Not one of them is itself *cognizable by the senses*. They must all be *assumed* by Science; and in accepting the use of them she acknowledges that her chosen domain of inquiry and investigation is very far from being coterminous with the whole domain of Being.

But, if this be true, how enormous are the consequences! For here is *one whole region of mind* excluded from the domain of physical science, and yet recognized as existing and real, and, in fact, standing in no need of scientific demonstration. Not only does it need no scientific demonstration itself, but its reality must be assumed in every process of scientific demonstration of anything else whatever. And if this be true of the senses, much more obviously true is it of the intellect—that purely mental faculty by which, receiving the reports of the senses, we arrange, abstract, generalize, mark relations of coexistence or succession. And, again, of our emotions—love, hate, terror, cheerfulness, and the like. And, again, of conscience. And, again, of that lordly will which chooses what course to pursue, and after firm resolves issues irresistible commands. But this is *the whole of the human mind*. If we do not know mind in itself, in its substance, we know it by its properties or operations. Mind is that which has sensations, thoughts, emotions, resolves, the sense of right and wrong. Not one of these properties or operations is cognizable by the senses. Not one of them, therefore, is within the domain of Science. This is manifest on what I may call simple inspection. It is proved collaterally by the action of Science herself when,

stepping outside of her proper province, she undertakes to deal with purely mental problems. The very first thing she does, in carrying out that vain endeavour, is to remove the very problem itself and substitute another in its place. For *sight* she substitutes *the eye*; for *intellect*, *the brain*; for *the will*, *sensory and motor nerves*. Need we, then, be so very much alarmed when Science, with a voice a little too rudely loud and truculent, tries to frighten us by the assurance that *she*, after all her researches, *knows nothing of God*? The answer is obvious: "Who expects you to know anything about God when you manifestly know nothing about *me*?"

I might pursue the same line of argument in relation to the other absolutely necessary *assumptions* of science—viz.: the trustworthiness of consciousness, and the veracity of memory, and the validity of logical processes. Without these assumptions not one single step can be taken in the direction of physical discovery—whether it be the discovery of the structure and habits of earth-worms, or the discovery of the next appearance of a particular comet. Now, these are *primary truths*, admitted as such by science; unless science is to be self-confessed a mere pretentious cheat. And "primary truths"—I am quoting a work which it is impossible to study too carefully, and which is one of the most valuable contributions to modern philosophy—viz.: Dr. W. G. Ward's *Philosophy of Theism* (i. 5-6)—"primary truths consist of two classes—viz.: (1) primary *premises*, and (2) the validity of one or more *inferring processes*. We may add that the cognition of a primary truth as such is precisely what is called an 'intuition.' If these primary truths are guaranteed with certitude—but not otherwise—there is a stable foundation of

human knowledge in its entireness and totality. The inquiry, then, to be instituted is this: Firstly, what *characteristics* must be possessed by those truths which the thinker may legitimately accept as primary? And secondly, *on what ground* does he know that the propositions are true which *possess* those characteristics? Or, to express the same thing in [other] words, firstly, what is the *rule* of certitude? and secondly, what is its *motive*? 1. Primary truths are those which the human intellect is necessitated by its constitution to accept with certitude, not as inferences from other truths, but on their own evidence; this is the *rule* of certitude; 2. These truths are known to be truths, because a created gift called the light of reason is possessed by the soul whereby every man, while exercising his cognitive faculties according to their intrinsic laws, is rendered infallibly certain that their avouchments correspond with objective truth; this is the *motive* of certitude."

I have neither space nor, unhappily, the ability to follow out the argument I have suggested in this sermon through all its ramifications. But in these dark and evil days, if we would strengthen our own faith and strengthen the faith, or prevent the apostasy, of others, we shall not, I think, much trouble ourselves with peddling arguments to prove the "scientific accuracy" of the book *Genesis*. We shall waste not an hour in trying to solve the difficulties of a piously-minded ship-carpenter who cannot understand the description of the structure or see the sea-going sufficiency of Noah's Ark. The question to-day is not, How long did the creation of the world occupy? nor, How far did the Deluge extend? *The question is this:*

Is there a living God? Is there a human spirit? And if we would answer this question, I think we cannot do better than follow, at however humble a distance, the example of the illustrious author of *The Analogy*. He had to deal with gay and flippant sceptics, who, professing to believe in "Natural" Religion, rejected "Revealed." For them, and such as they, his argument was and is conclusive, needing no change in its general principles, and next to none even in its minutest details. It may well be doubted whether any of those whom he met at the Queen's receptions were serious enough to read his book; but it was written not for them only, but for all time. Our work, at least in form, is different from his. We have to deal with sceptics, often also idle and flippant, who reject both Natural and Revealed Religion, but profess to "believe in" science; and to accept those primary truths upon which science rests, and without which science must be forever impotent. Our task, then, it seems to me, is to show, "whether men will hear or whether they will forbear," that those primary truths will lead us much further than science; will compel us to accept religion and to believe in God. And when we believe in God, Butler will show us how inevitably we must accept His revelations. But alas! No danger can be more serious than the habit of regarding religion as an open question, needing at this time of day to be elaborately argued. Our only safeguard will be to get away as often as possible from that narrow region in which nothing is to be found but objects cognizable by the senses. We shall know far more of the human mind and of the capabilities of genius by studying *Hamlet*, than by dissecting brains. Let us associate with the noble

men of all times, and imitate their noble deeds. And, after all, dealing so largely as we must with "the world and the things that are in the world," I am sure that we shall find our best, and only complete, protection in the *practice* of religion, in the word of God, in the Holy Sacraments, in the ever-repeated prayer of our earliest childhood, "Our Father which art in Heaven."

SELF-DELUSION.

But after certain days Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, which was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. And as he reasoned of righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season I will call thee unto me. He hoped withal that money would be given him of Paul: wherefore also he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. But when two years were fulfilled, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus: and desiring to gain favour with the Jews, Felix left Paul in bonds.—Acts xxiv. 24-27.

The narrative of which these words are a part, and which we have already read together in the Second Lesson for this morning's service,* is an example of that marvellous power of self-deception which is one of the commonest, not to say one of the universal, frailties of human nature. We observe it every day of our lives in everybody with whom we are in the least degree intimate. It takes the most various, and sometimes the most grotesque, forms. It might not be considered surprising that a man should fail to perceive his most secret peculiarities or most venial sins. But we meet with people continually who are utterly blind to their most obvious absurdities. To take, for example, what may be regarded as a foible rather than a vice:—what is more common than to find a man notorious for his *egotism* not only wholly unconscious

* Preached on the ninth Sunday after Trinity, 1886.

of his own infirmity, but contemptuously sarcastic when he observes the same infirmity in another? "My neighbour," he says, "can never talk about anybody but himself; he can never look at any subject but as it concerns his own interests; he has no sympathy with other people's troubles or successes; he invariably comes round, after a few complimentary sentences, or a brief interval of uninterested silence, to 'number one.'" And yet this very man is the derision of *his* neighbours for the very same ridiculous and offensive peculiarity. And what *we* can see in everybody else, everybody else can see in us. We are all deluding ourselves—unconsciously and consciously—by simulation and dissimulation; by pretending to be what we are not, and by pretending not to be what we are. And this self-delusion is not only a superficial varnish: it goes to the very bottom of our characters; it easily becomes transmuted into sheer hypocrisy; we not only disguise ourselves before men, but we "*lie to the Holy Ghost.*"

Therefore it is that Holy Scripture warns us, both by precept and example, against this most serious danger of self-delusion. "Who can tell," says the Psalmist, "how oft he offendeth? Cleanse Thou me from secret faults." "Surely," says Elihu, in the book *Job*—misapplying, indeed, a perfectly true principle—"surely it is meet to be said unto God, What I know not teach Thou me: if I have done iniquity I will do it no more." "He that trusteth in his own heart," says Solomon, "is a fool." "The heart," says one of the prophets, "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And again: "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness

for light and light for darkness, bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!" And this same propensity to self-delusion is set before us not only in warnings and precept, but in conspicuous and most instructive examples. Three of these it may be profitable for us to consider somewhat more at length. The first is the example of Balaam, whose history we shall be reading in the First Lessons for this evening and next Sunday. The second is the example of David. The third is the example of Felix.

There are few narratives in the Old Testament more picturesque and dramatic than the history of Balaam.*

* It may well seem that any commentary on this remarkable history must be superfluous after the sermons of Butler, Newman and Arnold, and after the graphic pages of Stanley in his *History of the Jewish Church*. It would, however, be very rash for any clergyman to take for granted that any large proportion of his congregation have read any of these sermons, though they are of the utmost value, and Butler's has a rank which may be truly called classic. Newman's also is a perfect model, not only of exposition, but of spiritual insight (*Parochial and Plain Sermons*, II., pp. 18 *et seqq.*, 1877). What is the irresistible fascination of Newman's *Sermons*? Perhaps their perfect simplicity, the utter absence of anything distantly approaching affectation. "We preach not ourselves." His one object is always to bring home to the conscience the precise lesson of Almighty God. Nobody but a scholar could have written such sermons as his, but they are absolutely without pedantry or display of any kind. Again, how pregnant are many of Newman's almost parenthetical suggestions, which are at the same time so perfectly appropriate to the matter he has in hand! Here is one in the very sermon about Balaam: "And here I would make a remark: that when a passage of Scripture, descriptive of God's dealings with men, is obscure or perplexing, it is as well to ask ourselves whether this may

How shall I describe him? Soothsayer, worker of charms and spells, inspired prophet, recipient of revelations from the God of Israel—all these he was. "His home is beyond the Euphrates, amongst the

not be owing to some insensibility, in ourselves or in our age, to certain peculiarities of the divine law or government therein involved" (p. 27). Stanley remarks on the history of Balaam, *more suo* (p. 210, Scribner's Edition, 1876): "In his career is seen that recognition of divine inspiration outside the chosen people which the narrowness of modern times has been so eager to deny, but which the Scriptures are always ready to acknowledge, and, by acknowledging, admit within the pale of the teachers of the Universal Church, the higher spirits of every age and of every nation." I have ventured to describe this as in Stanley's peculiar manner; by which I mean to imply generosity, keen appreciation of the value of truth, wherever found, and also a considerable admixture of speculative rashness. No doubt the Scriptures *do* acknowledge certain revelations outside the chosen people to be divine; but they make that acknowledgment on a perfectly definite principle, and with what I may call a very guarded parsimony. The *principle* is this: any direct communication from God to man of what he could not otherwise have discovered is recognized as a divine revelation; mere discoveries or speculations are not so regarded. Thus we might, on this principle, admit that the philosophy of Plato was a divine revelation, if he did not (apart from other objections) himself represent it as the result of his own careful inquiry and introspection: inquiry into the opinions of earlier thinkers, and careful scrutiny of the processes of his own intellect. But the revelation given to Balaam, and recognized in Scripture as divine, will enable us, better than whole pages of mere argument, to perceive the distinction between revelation *inside* and revelation *outside* the chosen people. Regarded *in itself*, it was one of a number of *sporadic* revelations; not forming part of a connected whole; not preserved by any protective envelope; not embodied and propagated in any *cultus*, or laws, or social institutions. It was *in itself*, therefore,

mountains where the vast streams of Mesopotamia have their rise. But his fame is known across the Assyrian desert, through the Arabian tribes, down to the very shores of the Dead Sea. He ranks as a warrior chief (by that combination of soldier and prophet . . . seen in Moses himself) with the five kings of Midian. He is regarded throughout the whole of the East as a prophet whose blessing or whose curse was irresistible, the rival, the possible conqueror, of Moses."* As we read the graphic narrative in *Numbers*, we forget long distances and the slowness of travel. As compared with Balak, Balaam is as Jacob to Esau; intellect

highly ineffective; it had no permanent effect even on Balaam; it did no good whatever to Balak; it died without issue; it led to nothing. It was, indeed, a divine revelation, and of very great intrinsic value. It was a prophecy, a distinct foretelling, of a whole series of events which took place long afterwards. It included, especially as reported by the prophet Micah, the fundamental principle of all religion. But it is *available for all mankind* precisely for this reason: it was brought *within* the methodical and continuous series of revelations granted to the chosen people; it was recorded in their Sacred Books; it had its place assigned to it in a whole system of truth. No doubt its recognition in Scripture as divine would include, by parity of reasoning, all other revelations *of the same kind and similarly treated*. If, for instance, by an impossible hypothesis, the really true portions of the Buddhist "Scriptures" had been imbedded in the Old Testament, fitted into their place in the series of revealed truths, and the like, *they* would have been "acknowledged"; only, as a matter of fact, they were not. On the other hand, the words "We are also His offspring" *are* accepted by S. Paul as *true*; though it may certainly be more than doubted whether he would have accepted them as, in any peculiar and authoritative sense, a divine revelation. It was a true saying of "one of your own poets."

* Stanley.

against brute force; spirit against matter; insight against impulse. He knew perfectly well that his enormous reputation had no solid foundation; he could *not* bless or curse at his own discretion; his power was not over facts, much less over God, but only over the imaginations of men; and that power it is scarcely possible to overestimate. Moreover, he has a kind of conscientiousness—nay, a high principle. He dare not promise more than he can perform. He must, at all cost, serve God; but he will make the cost as little as possible. He has “obedience without love.”* So, when the messengers of Balak come to call him, “with the rewards of divination in their hands,” he will obey God *if he must, and so far as he must*, but not otherwise nor farther. He *loves* the rewards of divination, he *fears* the divine vengeance.

But, to begin with, he is “a man of prayer”—not in a merely formal way, but in reality. And here we may note the first of his self-delusions: he deceived himself as to the very nature of prayer. Deceived *himself*, for we all know what prayer is *not*: it is *not* the power to change the divine purpose, or make things other than they really are. Thus much it is on the very face of the narrative that Balaam knew. “This is the boldness,” says S. John, † “which we have towards God, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him.” Prayer, then, is founded upon our knowledge of God and trust in Him; it consists in putting ourselves into harmony with His will; it is always answered, even when it seems to be denied; it

* Newman.

† I. John v. 14-15.

may be almost said to be most effective when it is most superfluous; its power is subjective possibly more than objective; but it is objective also, because God has made acts of faith and actual requests the conditions of His blessings; as also, without faith and prayer, our own spiritual perfection would be impossible. Nothing, therefore (I may remark parenthetically), could have been more absurd than the proposal of a distinguished scientist to *test* the value of prayer by putting it to a work which, by its very nature, it is precluded from attempting. We all *know* that it is *not* "according to God's will" that everybody should, in every case, be cured of a grievous sickness. We all *know* that to use prayer for the purpose of putting the Almighty on His trial—if we may so speak with reverence—is not prayer at all, but mere blasphemy. Balaam, then, chose, against his knowledge and better judgment, to regard prayer as a means of constraining God to change His mind. If He would not change His mind, Balaam must submit to the divine will; but at least he could try the experiment, and he thought he had succeeded.

At first, indeed, the answer of God was to Balaam's own mind perfectly unmistakable and conclusive: "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed." Surely there was nothing more to be said; he might not go, and if he did go he was powerless. "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor the son of man, that He should repent." But new messengers arrive, with new and larger promises, and Balaam *prays* once more. He perfectly knew God's will; his own promised rewards were nothing to the purpose; he had, in fact, made up his mind as to the path of duty. But still he would try

again. If God would give him leave to go, he might still combine "the rewards of unrighteousness" with the sufficient recognition of the Righteous One. "It is often said that second thoughts are best; so they are in matters of judgment, but not in matters of conscience. In matters of duty first thoughts are commonly best: they have more in them of the voice of God."*

We all know the sequel. "God came unto Balaam at night and said unto him, If the men be come to call thee, rise up and go with them." But "God's anger was kindled" against Balaam "because he went." With what in men might be called disdain, the Almighty granted to him the opportunity of self-destruction, though still withstanding him for his own good.† "The angel of the Lord placed himself in the way for an adversary against him." "The dumb ass, speaking with a man's voice, reprov'd the madness of the prophet." Yet when, having, as he supposed, wrung from the Almighty His permission to do wrong, he really came to Balak, he could only utter the divine message. He could find no enchantment against Jacob, no divination against Israel. Nay, he saw further and deeper into the future than any, so far as we know, of his contemporaries. He saw the sure triumph of

* Newman.

† This terrible power of foolish prayer did not escape the notice even of the Roman satirist, who closes his tenth Satire with words that would not be misbecoming even in the mouth of a Christian (Juvenal, x. 346-366):

Nil ergo optabunt homines? Si consilium vis,
Permites ipsis expendere numinibus quid
Conveniat nobis rebusque sit utile nostris.
Nam pro jucundis optissima quæque dabunt di.
Carior est illis homo quam sibi. &c.

God's chosen people, "the star coming forth out of Jacob, the sceptre rising out of Israel." He saw the people around him utterly subdued. In a far more distant future he saw that "ships should come from the coast of Kittim, and they should afflict Asshur, and should afflict Eber, and he also should come to destruction." Yet he chose deliberately to be on the losing side, and himself perished in battle against those whose victory he had so clearly foreseen.

Here, then, was a man who was blessed in a very extraordinary degree with every one of those privileges which might naturally be expected, and are exactly adapted, to serve as a perfect protection and safeguard against almost the possibility of self-delusion. He has special revelations from God; he has that exaltation of intellectual and moral faculties, that keenness of insight, to which we give the name inspiration; he cultivates the habit of prayer; and he receives answers to his prayers so perfectly unmistakable that they are represented in the history of his life as audible voices—which is very much more than any of ourselves are in the habit of receiving. And yet he contrived, almost to the very end of his life, to turn these very safeguards into the occasions of self-deception. Thus, for instance, the words of God, "If the men have come to call thee, go with them," were just as audible to his outer or inner ear as the words "Thou shalt not go with them." When, on his very journey to Balak, he said to the Angel of the Lord, "If it displease thee I will get me back again," the reply was perfectly clear: "Go with the men, but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that shalt thou speak." Those words which God gave to him he really

did speak ; and he no doubt persuaded himself that he was keeping the letter of the divine commandments, and that he had really persuaded God to sanction the road which seemed to lead most directly to his own private interests. Of course this self-deception could not last forever. *Deception*, on whomsoever practised, is an attempt to produce the belief that things are not what they really are. But they *are* what they really are, whatever our belief may be ; and when at last we are compelled to confront them, our delusions vanish—and nearly always too late—and we perish as Balaam perished.

The example of David is, in some respects, even more instructive than that of Balaam. In forming an estimate of his character, and of the grievous sin which he committed, we are nearly always misled by the very common error of judging a man who lived at a time and in social conditions very remote from our own by the standards which we justly apply to our own conduct. David has long been the scoff of shallow sceptics who entirely, and even stupidly, forget that when judged by their own principles he is scarcely deserving of censure. It may, in fact, be plausibly argued that he was very much above the average of his own contemporaries in virtue and magnanimity. Why should he be expected to be so very much farther in advance of his own age and circumstances? *We* condemn the sin of David because we believe those divine revelations which shallow sceptics despise so heartily that they consider sober argument thrown away on such puerile superstitions. If “God” be the mere creature of a natural infirmity of the human intellect, or of the mythopœic creativeness of the undisciplined imagination, what can

it matter whether David were, or were not, a man "after God's own heart"? It neither increases nor diminishes his guilt that he was on the whole approved by a nonentity. When he himself was brought to repentance, he was so overwhelmed with shame that his whole life seemed to him a mass of corruption. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." This was a perfectly true view of life for a godly man to take; but for our flippant sceptics it would have been a preposterous, and even impossible, delusion. They would go, indeed, much further than David—who is here far too profoundly impressed with the fact of his sinfulness, all through his life, to be merely enunciating a dogma of "original sin"—but they would have gone in the opposite direction. They would have excused David from all responsibility. The scientific dogma of original sin differs from the Christian in being far more revolting to the conscience—which our modern science obliterates—and also wholly incurable.*

* "Mental pathologists would do well, then, to begin their treatises on insanity with a preliminary dissertation on mental malformities, tracing each leading variety back to its origin, and following the steps of its growth; so might they throw light on the ways by which the various modes of defective observation and reasoning that spring from the biasing passions and tempers of human nature shut it out from thorough and veracious converse with facts, and grow from generation to generation into the structural outcomes of positive mental malformity. The brain is, as it were, essentially a consolidation of memories, and these consolidated embodiments of fallacies of thought and feeling might be described justly as the various spirits of error made flesh. And if that be their true origin and organic meaning, their functions will naturally furnish the most striking displays of these errors, the organ giving out the kind of function

But let us consider David's action apart from the high standard of pure religion which was revealed to Israel by Almighty God, and not least to David himself. He was an Oriental monarch who had power of life and death over his subjects. Most unquestionably he was conspicuous, on the whole, for the righteousness and generosity of his rule. An Oriental harem produced no shock to the morality of David's age; and his self-restraint in this direction was far more remarkable than his self-indulgence. Probably no other monarch would have hesitated a moment to take Bathsheba to himself without any further explanation than that the king desired her. Moreover, there was war actually going on, and Uriah the Hittite was as liable to be sent to a post of peculiar danger as any one else. I repeat that David's conduct is condemned, *not* by the customs of his age and place, not by any law of "moral" evolution that fairly could be applied to him, but *only* by that profoundly spiritual and exacting religion which was the grand possession of Israel, and which is the scorn of modern sceptics, who hold up to contempt and abhorrence a man who, on their own principles, was deserving of the highest honour.

which inspired its construction. A man could not think or do deceit habitually and naturally if his ancestors for years before him had not thought or done deceit, and in the end incorporated its spirit into the structure of his brain. If they have lived in mean spheres and comparatively simple social relations, where there was not much call for self-restraint, or need of delicacy of feeling, and he is launched into a larger human sphere, and into more complex and refined social relations, where self-restraint and respect for others are required, then the fundamental faults of his nature are brought into obtrusive exercise and conspicuous display." (Dr. Maudsley.)

But we, who believe the splendid series of divine revelations recorded in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, have no excuse whatever for David's sin. We do not believe that he inherited lust and cruelty, and that he could do no otherwise than as his inherited cerebral or other structure compelled him. And regarding him as an individual, gifted with a self-determining power of will, with a conscience, with an unusual spiritual insight, with special divine and supernatural revelations, we can only judge him as he judged himself, when he was enabled to see himself as he really was. And, so judging him, he is a conspicuous example of the power of self-delusion. For nearly a whole year he does not seem to have even realized that he was guilty of any special sin whatever. Nay more: he was evidently far too rigorous in his interpretation of all ordinary moral obligations. When the seer Nathan came to him with that pathetic parable, which even as literature is unsurpassed for simplicity and pathos, he not only insists upon full restitution for the "little ewe lamb," but, with enormously exaggerated indignation, dooms the offender to death. The moment "Nathan said unto David, *Thou art the man,*" his self-delusion vanished. There was not a single excuse or explanation to be offered on the subject. "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord." *That was the exact truth.* It is expressed more emphatically in the words of the Fifty-first Psalm: "Against Thee only have I sinned, and done that which is evil in Thy sight." For it was not evil in the sight of men in general, nor as judged by the morality of David's own life and station. The high spiritual judgment of David was no evolution out of the mass

of public opinion: it was then, and long afterwards, far in advance of any popular sentiment; it was the direct product of a divine and supernatural illumination and revelation. And perhaps the immediate lesson for us, in this most instructive narrative, is that we should most carefully look for the instruments or occasions of our self-delusion *in our highest gifts*. If we be raised far above others—which in our own case, indeed, may very seldom happen—in spiritual discernment, we may fall very far below our own highest level before reaching the highest level of ordinary people. We shall be inclined to measure ourselves by *their* standard instead of our own. We shall regard our judgments of duty and responsibility not as ordinary rules of life for ourselves—which they really are—but as “counsels of perfection.” Everybody is morally bound to live at the highest moral level possible for himself, whatever may, or may not, be possible to other people. David was very far in advance of popular moral sentiment; but he was not, and could not be, in advance of *his own* moral sentiment.

And here it may be well to remark upon the extreme unwisdom of applying abstract principles, even of morals, to concrete cases, without the utmost possible caution. We arrive at abstract principles by *leaving out of consideration* the individual peculiarities of any separate case to which they are to be ultimately applied. But *the individual peculiarities* are of the very essence of the case upon which we are to pronounce—if that lies within our province—a moral judgment. Take, for instance, the case of David. It seems easy enough to include it in some such syllogism as this: Murder and adultery are the worst

of crimes; anybody guilty of the worst of crimes is capable of any smaller crimes; therefore David (being guilty of murder and adultery) was capable of any other crime—in other words, was an utterly worthless reprobate. This conclusion is manifestly upset by the plain fact that David was *not* capable of stealing the “little ewe lamb.” Indeed, all these abstract, general principles assume that human beings are logically consistent, both in thought and act; whereas everybody knows that they are as far as possible from logical consistency in any direction whatever. Moreover, the very terms of this syllogism are open to question. Is it “murder” for the general of an army to send men to a post of peculiar danger? Is it “adultery” to take an additional wife in a state of society in which polygamy is recognized as lawful? Is “murder” morally worse than gossiping away a man’s reputation? Is “adultery,” followed by steady conjugal fidelity, morally worse than the all but universal fornication which in our great cities is the despair of priests, and which is deliberately recommended, in the present condition of society, by not a few physicians? Nay more, it is obvious that what seem, at first sight, exaggerations of criminality, may be really “extenuating circumstances.” S. Peter denied our Lord “with oaths and curses.” Who can doubt that the oaths and curses were a proof of the extreme *difficulty* of his sin? He could not deny his Lord at all until he had put forth an effort which carried him *far beyond his intention*. He had to bring himself to oaths and cursing before he could deny at all; and even then, when Jesus looked upon him, “he went out and wept bitterly.”

The example of *Felix* is, in some respects, even more instructive than either of those I have already considered. It is on a much lower and more vulgar level; and that, alas! is more nearly our own level. He does not care for the formal accuracy of his conduct, like Balaam, much less does he possess the inward piety of David. He has a certain general knowledge of truth and duty; a personal interest in the right which sometimes becomes dominant in his feelings, if not supreme; but he is perfectly determined to make the best of this world, and his self-deception is of such unstable equilibrium that it is forever on the verge of being transmuted into sheer hypocrisy.

When S. Paul. was brought before him he was Procurator of Judæa. Tacitus, in a single sentence which every commentator quotes, holds him up to infamy as one who, "indulging in every kind of brutality and lust, exercised the power of a king with the spirit of a slave."* He had been an Arcadian slave, and owed his elevation to the Procuratorship largely to the influence of Jonathan, one of the ex-high-priests of the house of Annas. This very Jonathan was, by the treachery of Felix, stabbed to death at one of the yearly feasts. The administration of the Procurator had not been without its merits: he had suppressed dangerous banditti, if he had also shared their spoils. The Jews, moreover, almost equally from their virtues and their vices, were very hard to rule.

It was before this man, then, that S. Paul was summoned to plead his cause. He had been sent to him

* Tacitus, *Hist.*, v. 9: "Antonius Felix, per omnem sævitiam et libidinem, jus regium servili ingenio exercuit."

by Claudius Lysias, with a summary statement of the criminal charges brought against him; and he was heard with promptness, according to Roman law; though, unhappily, the law appointed no time within which a definite sentence should be pronounced. It was easy enough for Felix to see that S. Paul's enemies had no case; it was also, unfortunately, equally easy to see that S. Paul might be a very useful and even profitable prisoner. His comparatively long administration had made him exceptionally familiar with Jewish sects and parties: with Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, and the new "Way," the way of the Nazarenes, the disciples of Jesus Christ. S. Paul assumes that this expression would be familiar to him: "This I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, I serve the God of my fathers." S. Luke also speaks of him as "having more exact knowledge concerning the Way." So, after hearing S. Paul's accusers, he reserves his judgment; and, "after certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, which was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus." He seems, at this stage, to have had some real interest in the subject—probably the interest of mere curiosity, just possibly a deeper interest.

But what, as S. Paul understood it, was "the faith in Christ Jesus"? Assuredly no system of doctrines merely, however true; no belief in the bare fact that one Jesus of Nazareth had lived and taught and wrought miracles and been crucified; all this Felix knew already, nearly as well as S. Paul. But "faith in Christ Jesus," as S. Paul understood it, meant personal loyalty and prompt obedience. It must, there-

fore, include, among its most rudimentary elements, "righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come."* And now we come to the manifest self-delusion of Felix. There are facts of the utmost conceivable importance which we admit to be real facts—expressed in words and propositions, we cannot help believing them—but we believe them in an otiose way, languidly, even—if that be not a contradiction in terms—negatively. We are not prepared to admit their contradictories. At the most they are to us mere notions, intellectual, not real; belonging to thought, not fact; abstract, not concrete. Hence they have no effect upon our conduct; or, at the most, they are a sort of far-off boundary, like the horizon—or perhaps like the peppercorn rent reserved in old deeds, so excessively small that it is absurd to trouble ourselves about it. It *might* involve the forfeiture of our estate; but it is as sure as anything can be that it never will. While we hold truth in this inactive way, self-deception would be a superfluous exertion, and hypocrisy a ridiculous expenditure of useless energy.

But, sooner or later, it happens to all of us that our slumbering beliefs awake—either of their own accord, or aroused by some disturbance from without. Then "righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come" cease to be abstractions. They clothe themselves with flesh and blood; they confront us not only as realities, but as *the* realities, the *only* real things which are of any serious importance. "Righteousness" becomes *righteous acts*; the deeds demanded by our consciences which, then and there, we did or

* διαλεγόμενον δὲ αὐτοῦ περὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἐγκρατείας καὶ τοῦ κρῖματος τοῦ μέλλοντος κ. τ. λ.

refused to do. "Self-control" becomes, not a gentlemanly reticence, abstinence from coarse and vulgar language or violent action, but *the resolute determination of the will* to abstain, even in secret, from what conscience forbids, and to brace ourselves for the high and heroic achievement of all possible goodness. "The judgment to come" is no longer a vague feeling that, in the long run, everybody will be the better or worse for his conduct in this world; but the vivid realization, as if to the very eyesight, of "the great white throne," and "the books" being opened, and of *ourselves* receiving the due reward of *our own* deeds. When this happens to us, we cannot possibly be indifferent. The only possible alternative is a prompt obedience or a voluntary self-delusion—if even this last be possible. It may happen that we *cannot* deceive ourselves; and then the only alternative is prompt obedience or deliberate defiance.

Now, this was precisely the crisis—the judgment of himself—which came to Felix when he listened to S. Paul. "Righteousness"—it became a real thing, not a mere intellectual abstraction. It compelled him to remember that he was a cowardly assassin, hiring the dagger that he dared not use himself. It compelled him to remember his collusion with banditti, his hand in what Americans call "deals," and "rings," and "spoils." "Self-control"—how, then, did it happen, among other things, that "Drusilla, which was a Jewess," was his wife? "The judgment to come"—doubtless he had heard of it as some remotely distant account that everybody would have to render for deeds that, after long millenniums, it might be hoped would be mainly forgotten, or lost altogether in the innumer-

able multitude of other deeds by other men. But *now* it was a real thing, seen as if by the very eye. And why should it be so far away? Why should not the final judgment be preceded by any number of preliminary judgments? Why should he not be called to account—as, in fact, so soon he was—for his Procuratorship of Judæa, and be compelled to answer all the charges of those infuriated Jews who never forgot and never forgave? He felt that he had come to the very edge of a rugged abyss, and that the very ground on which he was standing was crumbling away under his feet. What, then, was the alternative? For an alternative had surely come. He must either *promptly obey*, put himself right with “righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come,” or *deceive himself*. He chose to deceive himself.

And scarcely anything is easier than self-delusion, especially as to the judgment to come. Why, after all, should not all things continue as they are? The danger is not greater in reality because we happen to have become aware of it. We can be a little more on our guard, but we need not all at once reverse our mode of living. Felix quite easily accommodated himself to his new experience. His terror soon passed off. He became able to regard his position as a subject rather of speculative than practical interest. So he sent for S. Paul often, “and communed with him.” Nay, so far had his terror in the contemplation of “righteousness and self-control” subsided, that he deliberately carried on his religious inquiries as a means of securing bribes; and when one of his days of “judgment to come” actually arrived, “desiring to gain favour with the Jews, he left Paul in bonds.” This course of self-deception had

lasted for "two years"; and during every day of those two long years he had been guilty of a new act of unrighteousness in needlessly and cruelly prolonging the imprisonment of a man whom he knew to be innocent.

Such are some of the examples of self-delusion which we find in Holy Scripture; and "they are written for our learning, that we should not" deceive ourselves "as these also did." Some time or other—as, for instance, in listening to a sermon—there comes to every one of us a vivid realization of "righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come." We also are, like Felix, "terrified." We sit in judgment on ourselves, for a moment, with absolute impartiality, and we are self-condemned. We know that we must turn from our evil ways or die. It is not at all necessary that we should convict ourselves of what would be called some serious crime; the peculiarity of the case is that we are compelled to perceive that *every* offense against God is of incalculable seriousness, and that our whole life is crowded with such offenses. We resolve that we will amend, and "live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." Alas! even in this resolve we are almost always tricking ourselves. So wonderful are the complexity and subtilty of our mental operations, that in the very act of forming a resolution we are conscious of an undercurrent of protest and indecision. It is obscurely present to our own consciousness at the very moment that we have a reserve of refusal and retractation. We have an undefined, but real, recollection of similar resolutions in the past, and of how adroitly we evaded them. We all know, from experi-

ence, how many trains of thought can pass through our minds at the same time. What seems easier than the fluency of a practised speaker? Yet his fluency depends upon this very fact—that, while he is uttering the words which strike our ears almost at the instant of their utterance, *his* mind is dealing with words which are yet unspoken, and with the ideas they will express. He is not *remembering* a speech which he has learned by heart, he is constructing one as he goes along; and he is, perhaps, constructing it out of materials some of which are furnished to him by the very audience he is addressing. Their apparent apathy or the manifest keenness of their interest may quite change the plan of argument or the devices of rhetoric which he had really intended to use. A mere accident, a casual interruption, a burst of applause, a murmur of dissent, may be the occasion of an oratorical triumph. The processes of rapid thought, the incalculable celerity with which he produces an almost infinite number of new and unintended combinations, are a matter of the most common experience. Need we wonder, then, that in our new terror as we contemplate what our spiritual condition really is, we half comfort ourselves with the reflection that while we resolve upon amendment we can see a way of possible retreat? And this, if it be so, accounts for the fact that our good resolutions are so very often powerless; that the least breath can waft them away; that, more likely than not, they will be forgotten before we have had an opportunity even to begin to execute them. Thus the Offertory or the Anthem may divert our too unwilling attention; or conversation on the way home from church; or company at dinner. And then, from Monday morning to

Saturday night, we find ourselves in the whirl of business, and our poor resolutions are pushed utterly aside. They have been worse than useless: they have helped to produce a *character* of irresolution which may only too easily become fixed and incurable.

And if this be true even of our resolutions in relation to the very essentials of religion and morals, we can easily see how yet more unstable may be our resolves as to what might be considered mere aids to devotion and "means of grace." It might seem incredible—but that we know what we are—that any human being should imagine that he is independent of aids to devotion, when devotion is so very hard both to produce and to retain. The importance of the end determines the importance of the means for its attainment; and also, in the enormous majority of instances, their practical *necessity*. On this ground alone, and apart from a divine command and a special sacramental grace, the Holy Eucharist might well be regarded, at least in our present circumstances, as absolutely necessary to salvation. For what is it that our religion nearly always lacks? It lacks *vivid realization*; in fact, it is scarcely religion at all, it is an imperfect theology. It consists of notions, intellectual conceptions, abstractions, generalizations, doctrines of atonement, of justification by faith only, plans of salvation, authority of Holy Scripture, and the like. All these are, in varying degrees, mental representations of facts; but they are not the facts themselves, and they are often very imperfect and distorted representations of facts. A man may carefully ponder "the doctrine of Atonement" as a mere logician; *granting* certain facts as postulates, and then constructing his syllogisms as

if the facts were no more than the X and Y of logical symbols. But all this is nearly as remote from *religion* as chemistry or navigation. It is scarcely too much to say that a roadside crucifix contains more *religious* teaching than whole tons of "Evangelical" tracts. Now, what is one at least of the manifold blessings of the Holy Eucharist? Clearly this: it removes us from theology to religion. It makes religious truth *real*. A doctrine of Atonement is a series of propositions: a cross, an altar, the consecrated Elements, eating and drinking—these are in themselves perfectly positive, concrete, real; and they at once carry our thoughts and affections to the crucified Redeemer, the Eternal and All-sufficient Sacrifice, the actual Presence of the Risen Lord, the personal participation of Himself, our communion with God and with all God's people, living and departed. And feeling the exceeding poverty of our religious life, we resolve, again and again, that we will renew it at this fountain of immortality. We will come to God's altar, we will prostrate ourselves before the Redeemer of our souls, we will partake of the divine food, we will strengthen our weak faith by "drawing out . . . even the blood of His gored side"; . . . in the wounds of the Redeemer we will "dip our tongues": we will there "satisfy our hunger and forever quench our thirst."* But alas! the "early celebration" is *too* early; at midday our thoughts are so far astray that it seems almost a profanation for us, so preoccupied, to come to "that Holy Sacrament"—and our resolutions have evaporated.

And, to give no further particular examples of self-

* Hooker, *Ecel. Pol.*, v. 57. 12.

delusion and irresoluteness—which would be only too easy—I would remind you how lurid a light our own sad experiences and our observations of others throw upon *the future state*—upon the probable future condition of those who die in deliberate and hardened rebellion against God, or wilful and habitual disregard of Him. There are very many persons who regard the Christian eschatology as so inexpressibly cruel that it seems to them, out of mere reverence for the divine perfections, utterly unbelievable. It may, indeed, be very safely affirmed that the doctrine by which their consciences are so seriously disturbed is not always, nor generally, the really Christian doctrine. The Catholic Church undoubtedly teaches that there is a hell—by no means accurately defining, however, as *of faith*, where and what “hell” is. But she distinctly teaches that “hell” is the portion of those only who have deliberately and persistently, and from the bottom of their hearts, repudiated the divine authority and rejected the divine love. Nor will she venture to pass any judgment upon *individuals*, whose inmost hearts she cannot know, who may have at least “faith like a grain of mustard seed,” and a loathing of sin the depth and intensity of which they do not themselves realize. She recognizes that there may be, and in innumerable cases actually is, an “invincible” and therefore pardonable ignorance. Moreover, she teaches us, with various degrees of detail, that there is an intermediate state, in which mere frailty and imperfection may be remedied, and the departed spirit be subjected to a divine and purifying discipline. By far the largest portion also of the Christian Church teaches authoritatively that, in this intermediate state, the departed spirit may be aided, as

on earth, by the intercessory prayers and holy offices of those who survive.

But the fact to which I wish to call your attention is this: that *the Christian* doctrine of the future state is immeasurably *more hopeful* than any doctrine derived from our personal experience and observation of others—any doctrine of retribution derived from “Natural Religion.” For this very self-delusion and pitiable irresoluteness of will of which I have been speaking, we see, in innumerable instances, becoming habitual. Then it hardens into *character*. Men are “tied and bound by the chains of their sins.” They not only lose the disposition, but even *the faculty*, to judge themselves, and to turn from their evil way. Sin becomes a “second nature.” Repentance might, at any moment, avail them, were it only sincere; but they can “find no *place* for repentance, though they seek it carefully with tears.” The Gospel of Christ offers to them a divine aid which they cannot discover in Natural Religion; but they find themselves more and more incapable not only of using, but even of desiring, it. If the experience and analogies of the present life are any safe guide for our conduct and our hopes, there are multitudes of human beings who are every day of their lives doing their utmost to commit themselves to incurable despair. Nay, there are multitudes who seem to have succeeded in this awful spiritual suicide, and who, in powerless horror, will affirm that they are already damned. The Sacred Scriptures, indeed, are of divine authority; and by their clear teaching of heaven and hell, death and judgment, we must needs be bound. But, *even apart* from Holy Scripture, our very nature, our conscience,

our habits, are forever preaching to us: "Seek ye the Lord *while He may be found*; call ye upon Him *while He is near*." The warning voice of the Divine Wisdom finds its echo in every heart: "Because I have called and ye have refused, I have stretched out My hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all My counsels, and would none of My reproof; *I also will laugh in the day of your calamity: I will mock when your fear cometh*."

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES.

- I. REVELATION.
- II. REMARKS ON DR. MAUDSLEY'S "NATURAL CAUSES AND SUPERNATURAL SEEMINGS."

REVELATION.

A highly-valued friend, who has also done me the kindness of reading the proof-sheets of this volume, suggests that the first four sermons are, to say the least, very highly conservative; and that I have left out of consideration, or, at any rate, out of explicit recognition, almost the whole body of modern speculations and conclusions on the subject of Revelation. I value my friend's opinions very highly in themselves; but also because they indicate, in a warning way, which ought to help me to suppress any vain hopes, what is the very *maximum* of appreciation and sympathy which this little book may expect. If I have not made myself plain to him, it is quite certain that there are very few persons to whom I shall not seem obscure or inconclusive. It is not improbable that, after trying many roads and finding that they all end in a dismal swamp or dangerous quagmire, I may easily have become more "conservative" than I used to be. Anyhow, in these supplementary pages I will endeavour to make my meaning clearer by adding a few considerations for which Sermons, even when condensed and revised for the press, seemed scarcely the fitting place. If we are to deal satisfactorily with such a subject as *Revelation*, we must ask such questions as these: What is the meaning of the term Revelation? Does any revelation, in the sense in which we define it, really exist? How has it been preserved, and where is it now to be found? What was its object? What has been its effect?

It is perfectly obvious that this inquiry—unless it is to be a mere logomachy—can only be fruitfully carried on, in the way of argument, by persons who agree in certain primary assumptions. I think the smallest amount of assumption required for this purpose is the assumption of Theism—the belief of the existence of God. And by “God” I mean precisely what Butler means, what all Christian divines have meant, what—in his quietly ironical way—Mr. Matthew Arnold so persistently ridicules—viz., “An intelligent Author of Nature, with a will and a character.” The word “God,” indeed, is in these days employed by almost everybody; but we are concerned not with the word, but with what the word stands for. Listen, for instance, to Mr. Matthew Arnold (*S. Paul and Protestantism*, p. 8):

Neither is it that the scientific sense in us refuses to admit willingly and reverently the name of God, at a point in which the religious and the scientific sense may meet, as the least inadequate name for that universal order which the intellect feels after as a law, and the heart feels after as a benefit. “We, too,” might the men of science with truth say to the men of religion—“we, too, would gladly say *God*, if only the moment one says *God*, you would not pester one with your pretensions of knowing all about Him.” That *stream of tendency by which all things strive to fulfil the law of their being*, and which, inasmuch as our idea of real welfare resolves itself into this fulfilment of the law of one’s being, man rightly deems the fountain of all goodness, and calls by the worthiest and most solemn name he can, which is God, science also might willingly own for the fountain of all goodness, and call God. But, however much more than this the heart may with propriety put into its language respecting God, this is as much as science can with strictness put there.

This use of the name “God” seems to me a gross

and absurd abuse of language. If *this* "God" reveals anything, we must find a new meaning for the word "revelation," to correspond to the undiscoverable attributes of the hypothetical, purposeless and characterless revealer. Surely it might be more sensible altogether to decline a controversy which must be based on this admission of total ignorance or blank negation.

What is the real meaning of the words *reveal* and *revelation*, as used in ordinary English literature and the conversation of those educated English-speaking people who use their language with strict accuracy? All facts or truths which are *unknown* may be spoken of metaphorically—and our commonest words are, at bottom, nearly all metaphorical—as concealed by a veil or covering. To impart or to acquire the knowledge of facts heretofore unknown may be represented, metaphorically, as the removal of a veil or cover, whether the veil or cover be removed by ourselves or by somebody else. But these two *modes* of acquiring the knowledge of truth are essentially different from each other, and it is often of great importance to keep this difference prominently in sight. In order to do this it will be desirable, if possible, to denote them by different *names*; which, connoting the common process of *removing a cover or veil*, will further connote whether the veil or cover be removed by the very person who obtains new knowledge, or by some other on his behalf. Now, two such words exist in the English language, and are in constant use, and they are used precisely for these different purposes. They both connote *the removing of a veil or cover*; they further connote (severally) that the veil is *removed by*

one's self, and that the veil is *removed by another on one's behalf*. These words are *discover* and *reveal*.

Originally and etymologically these two words are exactly synonymous; but under the pressure of enlarging thought and for the sake of greater accuracy of expression—and at the same time as an economy of language—perfectly synonymous words acquire in a very short time slightly different shades of meaning. One of two perfectly synonymous words is manifestly superfluous *as a synonym*; but it may be used, and in the growth of language always is used, to convey the common meaning of the two *with a modification*. Both the synonyms may be thus used; so that perhaps no word is left to convey the *common* meaning *apart* from a modification. Perhaps the word *uncover* might be adequate to convey the mere notion of the process both of obtaining and imparting new truth; but, as a matter of fact, it retains still only its literal meaning.

To reveal, then, means *to remove for somebody else's benefit the veil which conceals truth hitherto to him unknown*; and *revelation* means *the removal by somebody else of the veil which was concealing from any one the truth which that unveiling has made manifest to him*. On the other hand, to *discover* means *to remove by our own industry or effort, or even purposeless act, the covering which concealed certain truths or facts*; and the substantive *discovery* has a corresponding connotation. Thus, *e. g.*, we should say, or might correctly say, that Mr. Darwin *discovered* certain habits of earthworms, and that in his very entertaining volume he *revealed* the knowledge of those habits to his readers.

But, after all, the real meaning of a word cannot be

ascertained by mere divination or guessing, or even by assuming that its history and present signification must necessarily have been determined by the general principles of what may be called the philosophy or science of language. The real question is: How, as a matter of fact, do recognized authorities actually employ the word? Now, there are two works which, even as English classics, will certainly be accepted as authoritative on such a question, if they contain any evidence at all on the matter—the Bible and “Shakespeare.” And these works are, on other grounds, of such supreme excellence that it has been found worth while to construct a perfect Concordance of each of them by which they may quite easily be consulted. Let us, then, begin with Shakespeare. The word *revelation* does not occur in Shakespeare’s plays, but its meaning will be, of course, determined by the meaning of the verb *reveal*. Here, then, are all the instances of the use of this word in Shakespeare;

Reveal yourself to him.—*Measure for Measure*, v. 1.

Lately we intended

To keep in darkness what occasion now

Reveals before ’tis ripe.—*Twelfth Night*, v. 1.

We will see them reveal themselves.—*All’s Well*, iv. 3.

Madam, I have a secret to reveal.—*I. Henry IV.*, v. 3.

Till the heavens reveal the damned.—*Tit. Andron.*, iv. 1.

Reveal how thou at sea did’st lose, etc.—*Pericles*, v. 2.

No; you will reveal it.—*Hamlet*, i. 5.

She revealed herself.—*I. Henry VI.*, i. 2.

Hath revealed to us the truth.—*II. Henry VI.*, ii. 3.

I never . . . revealed myself unto him.—*Lear*, v. 3.

There is not the slightest ambiguity about the meaning of any one of these passages; in every one of

them the word *reveal* means exactly what I have affirmed it means. In every case some person or some thing "removes a veil" for the benefit of somebody else.

It was one of the mental peculiarities of the late Mr. Frederick D. Maurice that when he had discovered a particular truth, sometimes an exceedingly obvious truth, he invested it with an altogether fictitious and exaggerated importance, and with almost infinite ingenuity employed it as a clue for the unraveling of all manner of mysteries with which nobody else could see that it had any special relation. Thus, for instance, he was profoundly impressed with the fact—perfectly well known to every intelligent person who uses the English language—that the word *reveal* means (etymologically) to *remove a veil*; and he seemed to think that this was a key to everything mysterious in the whole subject of revelation as a theological or religious problem. It seems almost incredible that so subtle a thinker—except perhaps by reason of his excessive subtlety—should have imagined either that he had made a new discovery as to the etymological meaning of the word *reveal*, or that that meaning would throw any clear light upon the real questions at issue in the whole discussion about *revelation* as a supposed fact or technical term of religion or theology. The real question at issue is, *Who is the revealer? What did He reveal? Where can we find His revelations or a trustworthy record of them?* Just at that time a series of *Present-Day Papers* was being issued, under the editorship of Bishop Ewing, and to this series Mr. Maurice contributed a paper entitled *Use of the Word "Revelation" in the New Testament*. Of that paper, the following most characteristic passage is the opening paragraph:

“In an advertisement prefixed to these tracts, Revelation is said to mean the giving of light, or the removal of a veil. That sense, however accordant with the obvious etymology of the word, has been said to be inconsistent with the reverence which we owe to the Scriptures. Modern usage has determined that the name shall denote the lessons which we receive from the Bible, as contrasted with those which we receive from the natural world, or from our own conscience and reason. To depart from that usage is, it is said, to show that we do not care for the testimony of the Bible; that we wish to substitute for it some theories or conclusions of our own.” It is a most curious psychological phenomenon that one so transparently honest as Mr. Maurice should have habitually and unconsciously, by the mere turn of a phrase or a question-begging epithet, misrepresented the opinions of those who differed from him. It was not affirmed, in this particular instance, or for the assigned reason, that he did “not care for the testimony of the Bible,” but that his peculiar and one-sided way of explaining revelation implicitly denied that there is anything *unique* in that revelation which is recorded in the Sacred Scriptures. If that revelation has no qualities, whether of matter, or origin, or authority, by reason of which it is rightly and inevitably *contrasted* with the lessons which we receive from “the natural world,” most unquestionably it is *not* what the immense majority of Christian people have always believed it to be. The truth contained in the Bible, like all other known truth, has become known to us by *the removing of a veil*. The question is, Was that unveiling a *revelation* or a *discovery*? This distinction Mr. Maurice seems to have left altogether out of

consideration. If it were a *revelation*, who *removed the veil*? Was it God, or was it "the natural world"? Mr. Maurice's long array of texts, and subtle exposition of them, really does not touch the questions at issue. On the other hand, it leaves the impression or creates the suspicion that he considered those questions as of secondary or no importance.

Mr. Maurice's list of passages in the New Testament where *reveal* or *revelation* occurs may be accepted as exhaustive, though I have not compared it with Bruder's *Greek Concordance*; at any rate it is abundantly sufficient. And every passage cited is an unambiguous example of that precise meaning which I have assigned to the words *reveal* and *revelation* as connoting a *revealer*; or, in other words, that the *veil* is *removed* by some other than the person to whom the previously unknown truth or fact is manifested. Here are a few of them: "Thou hast revealed them unto babes"; "he to whom the Son will reveal Him"; "in the day when the Son of Man is revealed"; "according to the revelation of the mystery"; "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit"; "I received the Gospel by the revelation of Jesus Christ"; "by revelation He made known to me the mystery"; "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time"; "the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him."

No doubt these words *reveal* and *revelation* have, like almost all others, secondary, tertiary, analogical, metaphorical meanings or applications. Thus, for instance, *revelation* may mean either the process of *removing the veil*, or the *result of that process*—the act of imparting truth, or the truth imparted; but it invariably, when employed by accurate writers or speakers, retains the

implication that one not ourselves is *removing the veil* for our benefit. Again, *the revealer* may be a real person, or some fact or abstraction personified. We discover in a drawer in a supposed miser's bureau a number of letters acknowledging with fervent thanks most generous gifts, and we say, "Those letters were *a revelation* to me." Here we do not mean to affirm that we set about trying to *discover* what the supposed miser's character really was. The knowledge of what it really was is regarded as brought to us from without, apart from our own effort, by certain letters. We personify those letters; we say they gave us *a revelation*. Without personification or metaphor, we might have expressed the same *result* by saying, "I discovered his true character by coming accidentally into possession of certain letters, and reading them."

The process, then, by which we arrive at the possession of hitherto unknown truth may be described metaphorically as the removal of a veil; and the veil may be removed either by ourselves or by somebody else for us. In the first case *we make a discovery*; in the second *we receive a revelation*. But it is obvious—still dealing only with the general question, and apart from religious or theological applications—that a *revelation* may be made to us in such a form as also to require a discovery—that is to say, not an independent discovery of the truth revealed (which would supersede the necessity of a revelation), but *a discovery of the revelation*. Truth may be revealed to us by direct communication. This kind of revelation is perfectly familiar to us; we make and receive such revelations every day of our lives. On the other hand, it may be revealed by letter, or by books, or by directing us to sources of knowledge of which

we should not otherwise have been aware. Take the case I have already instanced—Mr. Darwin's delightful book about *Earthworms*. Before we can really avail ourselves of his interesting discoveries we must get his book and read it. This will be a process of *discovery*: we find out where the book is, and what it contains. But we do not *discover* the peculiar habits of the earthworms: *Mr. Darwin* discovered *that*; he *revealed* his discoveries in a book; and *we* discover *the revelation*. In fact, it may be admitted that whenever we are removed from immediate personal contact with the revealer, discovery will always be necessary to put us in possession of the benefits of the revelation. This by no means implies that a revelation is useless; for even though it may be very difficult to discover the revelation, it might for us have been utterly and forever impossible to discover *the truths revealed*.

But though a revelation almost always requires a supplementary discovery, it is by no means true, conversely, that every discovery implies a previous revelation. This would involve both a contradiction in terms and a denial of the most obvious facts of everyday experience. For, as to the terms, how can it be possible to remove a veil or cover which has been removed already?

And as to facts, when we speak of people who have knowledge *at first hand* do we not mean exactly this—that they found it out for themselves, without direct assistance from other people? It seems to me incredible that anybody should miss or neglect these distinctions, except under the blinding or deflecting influence of some supposed logical or theological expediency. It is, by very many distinguished persons,

denied that there is in the Sacred Scriptures the record of any real revelations from Almighty God. Many Christians become perplexed and alarmed by these bold denials, and they are willing to compromise. "How," they ask, "can you deny revelation in Scripture when we have revelations everywhere? The very earthworm is a revelation." This seems to me like having a protective tariff which protects *everything* in exactly the same way and degree. If *everything* is a revelation, it is safe to affirm that *nothing* is.

For my own part I entirely disbelieve this. I do not believe that all human discovery is a discovery of revelations of facts, and not of facts themselves; nor do I believe that all facts, when they have been discovered, can be called revelations without a gross and needless and highly mischievous abuse of language. Take Mr. Darwin again, and our delightful earthworms. Which is the correct statement of actual fact: "Somebody revealed to Mr. Darwin the habits of earthworms"; or this: "Mr. Darwin found them out for himself"? If anybody affirms that somebody revealed this to Mr. Darwin, who was the somebody? Certainly no human being, no previous discoverer; that, in fact, would only have removed the question a step backward. "Well," a religious person with a muddled intellect, or a mystical way of looking at things, might reply, "*God* revealed it to Darwin." Another may say, "Nature revealed it." How? directly or indirectly? "Indirectly." How indirectly? "By giving Darwin faculties adapted for discovering, and leaving in his way things to be discovered." So it would seem that throwing all sorts of things about in all directions, piling them on each other, hiding some of them under

heaps of rubbish, and giving a man the faculty of finding them out if he happens to wish it, and is very skilful and persevering—*this* is exactly the same thing as *giving a man such accurate information* about where and what these different scattered objects are as we have in Darwin's book about the habits of earth-worms. The only way to refute a theory of this kind is clearly to state it.

And as the habits of earthworms were not revealed to Mr. Darwin, but discovered by him, so, when discovered, they did not themselves reveal anything further. To attribute the power of *revealing* to an earthworm is another example of the policy, in our modern theological controversies, of a protective tariff all round. First of all somebody suggests, as if it were a very valuable discovery, that revelation is *removing a veil*. But removing a veil requires a *remover*. In fact, all these terms, reveal, revelation, revealer; discover, discovery, discoverer—all imply *intelligence*. To say that a stone or an earthworm reveals anything is to build a metaphor upon a metaphor. But *what* veil does the earthworm remove, concealing *what* hitherto unknown truth or fact? Is it the hitherto unknown fact of its own existence or habits? But the veil which covered *that* fact has already been removed *by Mr. Darwin*, and the worm has nothing left to do but creep about and be looked at.

There are many people now-a-days who seem unable or unwilling to acknowledge any special revelation given by Almighty God and recorded in the Sacred Scriptures, while yet they are deeply impressed with the conviction that such revelation is needed, and that such revelation has been somewhere given. In this

part of my exposition I have not reached the assumption which I consider necessary for a complete investigation—viz.: the assumption of Theism. But, as a mere theory, the *special* revelations given to Israel and recorded in Scripture are far more in accord with our general experience of the phenomena of Nature and life than *universal* revelations, given everywhere in general and nowhere in particular. Why is it not enough that an earthworm should *be* an earthworm, and *nothing more*? Why must we insist that it shall be also a Doctor of Divinity, write a new Butler's *Analogy* adapted to modern thought, or play the mediator between Science and Theology, Reason and Faith? Indeed, this new theory of a revelation in everything, from a tadpole to the sublime discourses recorded in the Fourth Gospel, which is the most subtle and delusive form of the denial of any revelation, involves, in spite of the grain of truth which it contains, a complete stultification of the very idea of revelation even in its most rudimentary form. If *everything* in the universe is busily engaged in stripping itself naked, and in removing the veil or cover from everything else, how can it possibly happen *that there is any cover left on*? We must, on this hypothesis, define revelation as a conceivable process of removing veils, if we had our place in a universe in which there were any veils to remove.

I hope, then, that I have made clear not only what I suppose to be the meaning of the words *reveal*, *discover*, and their correlatives, but what the real meaning of those words is, as determined by the use that is continually made of them in standard and classical literature, and in the conversation of educated people

who speak accurately. And now it is high time to take into our consideration that assumption of Theism without which, of course, all discussion of religious matters must be entirely nugatory. But our previous investigations will still avail us; for, however far our discussion of religious matters may lead us, we shall be greatly assisted by keeping clear in our minds the distinctions to which I have called attention, and which I have tried to make plain, in the preceding remarks. Indeed, it seems to me that whether we regard religion as a system of truths, or as rules for the guidance of life, the difference between Natural and Revealed Religion—to adopt Butler’s language—is precisely this: the truths and rules of Natural Religion have been *discovered*, the truths of Revealed Religion have been made known to us by some other than ourselves. From the one set of truths and rules *we have ourselves removed the veil*; from the other *the veil has been removed for us by some Other*. “Natural and Revealed” is, in fact, exactly equivalent to “*discovered* and *revealed*,” as above defined and illustrated; or, taking in the assumption of Theism, “discovered by man, and revealed by God.” And here we must remember that what was originally revealed by God will need to be discovered *as a revelation* by those who are to be benefited by it; and what was discovered by one man, or set of men, will be a *revelation* (not directly from God, but from the *discoverers*) to all those who have been either unable or unwilling to make the discoveries for themselves.

In what follows, in this section, it must be remembered, I am about to make use of the assumption of Theism: the assumption which, with his exquisite

irony, Mr. Matthew Arnold so pitilessly derides: the assumption of "an intelligent Author of Nature, with a character and a will." And this may be an assumption—that is to say, the admitted postulate or datum of an argument—even though it might be itself the result of discovery or revelation. But the question may be worth considering, as affecting even those who repudiate the assumption, Is it really nothing more? Is it not, for instance, the result of *discovery*, of our own persistent endeavours to find out the veiled and concealed truth? I think not. It seems to me that we could never have *set out* on the discovery of a *God* if we had not already been aware of His existence. No Columbus sets out to discover an "America" until he is inwardly certain that an "America" exists. Before we try to *find* God we must at least believe that *He is*. The *idea* of God, the inward conviction of His existence and that He is such or such a Being, must have been in our minds before it could have been possible for us to go in quest of further information. How, then, did we arrive at that primitive belief? It seems to me that we arrived at it by *revelation*, and that the revelation of the existence of God, and of His righteousness, is given to every man in his very nature, and especially in his conscience.

And here I may repeat what I said above, that a revelation—*any* revelation—*e. g.*, from man to man—may be made in many ways. It may be made directly, by actual oral communication, face to face; or by letter; or by books; or by giving information of the place where the required unknown truth may be discovered; or by putting a person in circumstances, which otherwise he would have been neither able nor

perhaps willing to place himself in, where it will be *absolutely impossible for him to avoid becoming aware of the truth* which otherwise he could never have known. It is in some such way as this last, it seems to me, that God has *revealed* to every human being His existence, His righteousness, His supreme authority, His sure judgment. He has put every man in close contact with a *conscience* from which he can never, by any device, separate himself. He has made conscience a part of every man's nature. We have all observed that in the paper on which we write there is often inwoven the name of the manufacturer. We cannot erase it. It is not written *on* the paper, it is *woven into* it: it is a part of the paper itself. In some such way God seems to have inwoven Himself in the life and consciousness of every human being; and hence it comes to pass that the most ignorant have *some* knowledge of God, and the most subtle and sceptical of mankind *can never get rid of it*. Force, order, law, righteousness, "a stream of tendency"—all these words or phrases are more or less inadequate synonyms for the name *God*. We *assume* Theism, then, because it is given to us by a primary and universal revelation; and all that discovery can do is to find out, so far as human nature can, exactly what it means. Meanwhile it is the assumption on which our further discussion of revelation will be based.

Setting out, then, from this primary assumption—whether we regard it as a divine revelation or as a mere logical datum—we start on our voyage of discovery to find out what sort of world the "intelligent Author of Nature, with a character and a will," has actually constructed; how we can make the best of it;

in what way we must live to secure His approval, or, at least, to avoid His punishment and curse. And here we are confronted, not with theories, but with facts. Human beings generally are not skilled logicians. The world, nevertheless, is full of religions, which have not been made, but have grown—we know not how. Men really did begin with the conviction of the positive reality of God, not as a hypothetical datum for argument, but as a living Being, more real, if possible, than His creatures and worshippers. They were very ignorant and confused. They often “divided the substance of God”—to use a convenient phrase of technical theology. They scarcely dared to contemplate the one ultimate Source of all that is. They personified His various attributes. They made to themselves “gods many and lords many.” But almost everywhere we meet with some recognition of a primal Source of all life, some “Father of gods and men.” We have Zeus, or destiny, or an unfathomable abyss of life and power too awful to name, too dreadful to approach. If we want to know what the discoveries of Natural Religion are, we can find this out by examining the actual natural religions which have left their record in history, or poetry, or art, or superstition. And to help us in this investigation I can remember nothing better than the wonderful chapter (Chapter X.) by which Cardinal Newman concludes his *Grammar of Assent*.

Of course, it may be truly urged that the discoveries contained in existing or extinct natural religions are, on the one hand, rough, unverified, unscientific; and, on the other, that nearly all these religions have come into contact, at one time or other, with what Chris-

tians claim to be revelations properly so called—that is to say, revelations as above defined, and as distinct from discoveries. It may be well, therefore, to approach the subject from a somewhat different point of view. Given, then, as the primary assumption, an intelligent Author of Nature, we discover that Nature is a scheme or constitution ; that it includes ourselves, and therefore involves moral government. And in these investigations I have yet to discover any better guide than Butler. To read over again the *Analogy* and the *Sermons on Human Nature*, after the dizzying and incredibly venturesome speculations of modern times, has a steadying and healthful influence, like several days' rest at home after a stormy ocean voyage not unaccompanied by exhaustion and distress of intolerable seasickness. Let us, then, carefully consider the following passage from the *Analogy* (pp. 131–133, Oxford Edition):

Upon supposition that God exercises a moral government over the world, the analogy of His natural government suggests and makes it credible that His moral government must be a scheme quite beyond our comprehension ; and this affords a general answer to all objections against the justice and goodness of it. It is most obvious, analogy renders it highly credible, that, upon supposition of a moral government, it must be a scheme—for the world, and the whole natural government of it, appears to be so—to be a scheme, system, or constitution whose parts correspond to each other, and to a whole, as really as any work of art, or as any particular model of a civil constitution and government. In this great scheme of the natural world, individuals have various peculiar relations to other individuals of their own species. And whole species are, we find, variously related to other species upon this earth. Nor do we know how much farther these kinds of relations may extend. And, as there is not any action or natural event which we are

acquainted with so single and unconnected as not to have a respect to some other actions and events, so possibly each of them, when it has not an immediate, may yet have a remote, natural relation to other actions and events much beyond the compass of this present world. There seems, indeed, nothing from whence we can so much as make a conjecture whether all creatures, actions and events, throughout the whole of Nature, have relations to each other. But as it is obvious that all events have future unknown consequences, so if we trace any as far as we can go into what is connected with it, we shall find that if such event were not connected with somewhat farther in Nature unknown to us, somewhat both past and present, such event could not possibly have been at all. Nor can we give the whole account of any one thing whatever ; of all its causes, ends and necessary adjuncts—those adjuncts, I mean, without which it could not have been. By this most astonishing connection, these reciprocal correspondencies and mutual relations, everything which we see in the course of Nature is actually brought about. And things seemingly the most insignificant imaginable are perpetually observed to be necessary conditions to other things of the greatest importance, so that any one thing whatever may, for aught we know to the contrary, be a necessary condition to any other. The natural world, then, and natural government of it, being such an incomprehensible scheme—so incomprehensible that a man must really, in the literal sense, know nothing at all who is not sensible of his ignorance in it—this immediately suggests, and strongly shews the credibility, that the moral world and government of it may be so too. Indeed, the natural and moral constitution and government of the world are so connected as to make up together but one scheme ; and it is highly probable that the first is formed and carried on merely in subserviency to the latter ; as the vegetable world is for the animal, and organized bodies for minds. But the thing intended here is, without inquiring how far the administration of the natural world is subordinate to that of the moral, only to observe the credibility that one should be analogous or similar to the other ; that therefore every act of the divine justice and goodness may be sup-

posed to look much beyond itself and its immediate object ; may have some reference to other parts of God's moral administration, and to a general moral plan ; and that every circumstance of this His moral government may be adjusted beforehand with a view to the whole of it.

As we read this passage we may see how much truth there is in the concession or assertion which it is just now the fashion to make with so much rashness or generosity—that, so far from a special revelation being impossible or incredible, revelation is an everyday occurrence. Not in the poetic musings of “the melancholy Jaques,” but in sober prose, everything (we are told) is a revelation ; and old-fashioned Christian apologists have been in error not because they affirmed too much, but because they affirmed too little. I think this is much more than a mistake in terminology. The fact is that the phenomena of Nature are not the *removers of a veil* : they are the very veil to be removed. *Underneath* them lies concealed the divine character and will. They do not tell their own secret ; it is only by a violent metaphor that they can be supposed so much as to know that there is a secret to tell. It is only by the light of our *human* nature, as disclosed in consciousness, including *conscience and will and intelligence*, that we reach the discovery of a “course and constitution of Nature.” It is the constitutive and regulative power of reason in ourselves which enables us to discover that there is a *government* in *Nature* ; and to mistake the multitudinous phenomena by which we are surrounded for *revelations*, is exactly like mistaking the riddle itself for the solution of the riddle. On the other hand, they serve the purpose of hints or suggestions by which the solution of the

riddle is made more and more easy. Thus the habits of earthworms, the fangs and venom of a rattlesnake, and such-like, though the knowledge of them is not necessary for the purpose, yet when we come to know them, do contribute to our firm belief, and even positive discovery, that there is a "course or constitution of Nature" as distinguished from isolated, disconnected phenomena. But when Agassiz says—I am indebted to a friend for the quotation, which I have not verified—or if he says, "A physical fact is as sacred as a moral principle," he is using language which, to me, is either unintelligible or absurd. Is a snail as "sacred" as "the Sermon on the Mount"?

Given, then, the assumption, whencesoever derived, of "an intelligent Author of Nature, with a character and a will"; our own nature, including senses, intellect, emotions, will, conscience; and an innumerable multitude of phenomena of all kinds, and manifestly related to each other in all kinds of ways; we arrive at the following *discoveries*: There is a course or constitution of Nature, "a scheme, system or constitution, whose parts correspond to each other, and to a whole" (*Analogy*, p. 131). We are under a government both natural and moral. We are "rewarded or punished respectively for all that behaviour here which we comprehend under the words virtuous or vicious, morally good or evil. Our present life is a probation, a state of trial and of discipline. . . . The world is in a state of apostasy and wickedness, and consequently of ruin the sense both of our condition and duty being greatly corrupted amongst men" (*Analogy*, pp. 10-11). There is a universal and ineradicable belief that "mankind is appointed to live in a future state," and that

the consequences of our conduct here will extend to that future state. The Author of Nature is good, having so constituted us that obedience and virtue promote our happiness. He is also righteous, inexorably punishing disobedience and vice. We are exposed to suffering by the misconduct of others, because we form part of a constitution or system, and are not simply isolated individuals. The consequences of wrongdoing cannot be removed by mere repentance, however sincere. The consequences of wrongdoing are very often and very seriously diminished, or wholly removed, by the aid of others; which aid often involves severe suffering on the part of those who seek to benefit the wrongdoer. These, I think, are the discoveries—and I think all the discoveries—of Natural Religion; and we find, on the side of practical Natural Religion, prayers and sacrifices and various rites and ceremonies founded on one or other of the above-named discoveries. None of these truths, however, are *revelations*, properly so called. They are found out by ourselves duly and carefully examining given facts by the aid of given faculties. It is, however, manifestly *possible*—on the primary assumption of “an intelligent Author of Nature”—that they might be *both* revelations and discoveries; revealed to some, and discovered by others; first discovered, and then in addition clearly revealed. But, as *discoveries*, the truths enumerated above seem to me to exhaust the doctrines of Natural Religion.

Now, when we carefully consider these discoveries or doctrines of Natural *Religion*, we perceive at once these two facts: first, they differ very widely indeed from the discoveries and doctrines of natural *science*; and second, they are pitifully inadequate for the moral and

spiritual guidance of human beings. In this last respect they are very good, so far as they go, but they go a very little way. First, then, they differ very widely from the doctrines of natural science. So far as they include *facts*, they are scientifically verifiable. Thus, for instance, in certain circumstances, we demonstrably suffer pain or enjoy pleasure. But it is impossible to express the doctrines of Natural Religion without employing terms which are wholly alien to physical science; which to physical science are neither true nor false, or, to speak more accurately, convey no meaning whatever. Thus the terms government, scheme, constitution, moral, right, wrong, reward, punishment, are to physical science *absolutely meaningless*. Physical science can, and does, conduct all its processes of discovery and arrangement without a single thought either of God or of conscience, and its conclusions would be as valid on the hypothesis of Atheism as on the hypothesis of the truth of the Christian religion. The discoveries of physical science are *the raw material* of natural theology. That is to say, natural theology deals with the discoveries of the physical sciences *on a certain hypothesis*, and for *a certain purpose*: on the hypothesis of "an intelligent Author of Nature, with a character and a will," and for the purpose of discovering what that character and will are, and how we can conform ourselves to the one and obey the other. If Physical Science could first borrow from *metaphysics* the conception of *force*, and some others—which in fact she does—all her discoveries might be made and arranged by means of the senses and the intellect; the discoveries of natural theology require, in addition to these, conscience and will.

But, secondly, even the most exhaustive statements of the doctrines of Natural Religion are pitiably inadequate for the moral and spiritual guidance of mankind, to say nothing of comfort and hope and joyous confidence. We find ourselves in the presence of a divine Being whose power, at least in relation to our own, is infinite. He is, indeed, good and gracious; but He is also inexorably just. If we do right we may be happy—though liable to suffering from the wrongdoing of others. If we do wrong, even ignorantly, we must certainly and acutely suffer. We are in the midst, are a part, of a scheme or constitution of things so vast and so complicated that it is immeasurably beyond our comprehension; and the wrong that we do or that others do may, for what we know, extend over all space and last through all time. Remedial agencies, and the mediatory good offices of our fellow-men, somewhat mitigate our sufferings and our alarms. But we cannot escape the irresistible belief in a future life, where our condition will be determined by our life on earth. Emphatically “we are strangers on the earth”; and yet an accurate knowledge of *this* life is an indispensable preparation for the next. Can there possibly be anything in our relations to God at all corresponding to that aid which we receive from the mediation, or even “the vicarious sufferings,” of our fellow-men in this earthly life? Above all, is our confident belief in a future life a mere baseless dream? If not, what *is* the future life? How shall we be judged? how acquitted or how condemned? how, were such a thing only possible, pardoned or redeemed? These are the questions which the discoveries of Natural Religion at once suggest and leave unanswered; and

therefore the prevailing tone of Natural Religion is an almost intolerable gloom, a paralyzing terror.* At this point *discovery* is exhausted; if our fears are to be

* See, on this point, the first part (*On Natural Religion*) of the last (Xth) chapter of Newman's *Grammar of Assent*. Also, see Sellar's *Roman Poets of the Republic*, Chapter XIII., on *The Religious Attitude and Moral Teaching of Lucretius*. Religion, to Lucretius, is a hideous misery. The following passage everybody knows; I give it in Munro's admirable translation: "This is what I fear herein, lest haply you should fancy that you are entering on unholy grounds of reason and treading the path of sin; whereas on the contrary often and often that heinous religion has given birth to sinful and unholy deeds. Thus in Aulis the chosen chieftains of the Danaï, foremost of men, foully polluted with Iphianassa's blood the altar of the Trivian maid. Soon as the fillet encircling her maiden tresses shed itself in equal lengths adown each cheek, and soon as she saw her father standing sorrowful before the altars and beside him the ministering priests hiding the knife, and her countrymen at sight of her shedding tears, speechless in terror she dropped down on her knees and sank to the ground. Nor aught in such a moment could it avail the luckless girl that she had first bestowed the name of father on the king. For, lifted up in the hands of the men, she was carried shivering to the altars, not after due performance of the customary rites to be escorted by the clear-ringing bridal song, but in the very season of marriage, stainless maid mid the stain of blood, to fall a sad victim by the sacrificing stroke of a father, that thus a happy and prosperous departure might be granted to the fleet. So great the evils to which religion could prompt!" But even if Lucretius had been able to deliver men from the dire superstition which peopled the next world with horrors, he could not lighten its darkness nor fill up its cold and appalling vacuum. What an exquisite pathos is in these three lines!—

Iam jam non domus accipiet te læta, neque uxor
Optima, nec dulces occurrent oscula nati
Præripere et tacita pectus dulcedine tangent.

Ah! yes—and there is *nothing after!*

allayed, our ignorance dispelled, the intricacies of our duty unraveled, it must be by that other mode of *removing the veil* from hidden truth—viz.: REVELATION. And as *men* have not only exhausted their powers of discovery, but also their powers of communicating what they have discovered to others, the only revelation that can possibly avail us must be a REVELATION FROM GOD.

When we come to the question, *Has a revelation from God been given to us* to complement our own *discoveries*?—which discoveries are the matter or contents of Natural Religion—we must keep steadily in mind the difference, already explained, between a *discovery* and a *revelation*; a discovery is *our own work*, a revelation is *the work of another on our behalf*. Moreover, we must remember that we come to the consideration of this question with the assumptions and discoveries of *Natural Religion*. Those who repudiate Natural Religion I leave for the present out of consideration.

But though, by this very hypothesis, Natural Religion has quite exhausted its resources, it has left us with hopes and reasonable expectations which it was itself unable to satisfy. If God be good, for instance, it is not unreasonable to expect that He will not “hide His commandments from us.” If He be righteous, it is not unreasonable to expect that He will enable us to do His will, to conform ourselves to His righteousness. As a matter of fact, a long series of lawgivers and prophets claim to have received *revelations*, not to have made *discoveries*, which are exactly adapted to secure for us those blessings of which we are so deeply in need. Now, surely, on the assumptions and discoveries of Natural Religion, this is not *impossible*. If God

could create us—which manifestly He has done, for here we are—if He has left in our way the materials by means of which we could discover the truths of Natural Religion—and this is an admitted fact—He certainly could supplement or complement these gracious operations by distinctly telling us, by chosen messengers, what the real spiritual meaning is of the phenomena among which we are placed; together with such further instruction as may *sufficiently* answer the questions and solve the difficulties with which Natural Religion is incompetent to deal. What we should expect, setting out from Natural Religion, would be a revelation of truths necessary to our salvation; some clear teaching about the future state; rules for the guidance of our lives, accurate information of the way in which we may be delivered from the curse and bondage of sin, and brought into blessed communion with our Father in Heaven, and so also with our brethren upon earth. The human faculties themselves are abundantly sufficient for the *discovery* of the truths of natural science; for this, therefore, no *revelation* is necessary, nor perhaps desirable. We need *revelation* when *discovery* is exhausted—and especially, not to say only, to answer the questions about the moral government of the world which Natural Religion is insufficient to solve. A revelation could not have consisted in the production of a new set of phenomena, to be discovered and applied, even if such phenomena had been produced—which they have not; nor in the mere exaltation of existing human faculties, of which, also, there is no evidence. It is claimed to have been a series of direct communications from God, to chosen messengers and representatives, of new and otherwise undiscoverable truths, necessary for

our complete guidance as moral and responsible beings, and for our redemption from the sin and folly in which we find ourselves involved. To be available for all mankind, these communications must have been, and were, recorded in "books," and also embodied in the institutions and ritual of the Jewish and Christian Churches. In other words, the written record of the special revelations of God to man of truths necessary to his salvation is contained in the Sacred Scriptures, and in the Sacred Scriptures only. This is, I believe, the uniform teaching of the Catholic Church; though sometimes the Sacred Scriptures are represented as *being* what they do, in very fact, *contain*. Whether this account of the Sacred Scriptures is the uniform teaching of the Catholic Church, everywhere and always, or not, it is indisputably the teaching both of the Roman and Anglican Churches.

The doctrine of the Anglican and American Church on the Holy Scriptures is defined in the sixth of the *Articles of Religion* :

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation ; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them canonical.

There is a curious ambiguity in the wording of this article. It distinguishes "canonical" books from "Holy Scripture." For it is as certain as any historical fact can be that several of "the books of the New

Testament, as they are commonly received," are not "books . . . of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church."

The doctrine of the Roman Church on the Holy Scriptures is defined by the Council of Trent (*Sessio IV. Decretum de Canonicis Scripturis*). This decree is supposed to differ very widely from our Sixth Article of Religion; and Bishop Browne, in his *Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*, makes use of the Tridentine Decree partly for the purpose of showing what our reformers intended to exclude or to deny. "This [Tridentine] decree," he says, "declares that 'the truth is contained *in the written books* and in the *unwritten traditions*, which, having been received by the Apostles, either from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the dictates of the Holy Spirit, were handed down even to us'; and that the Council 'receives and venerates with *equal feeling of piety and reverence* all the books of the Old and New Testament, since one God was the Author of them both, *and also the traditions*, relating as well to *faith* as to *morals*, as having, either from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the dictation of the Holy Ghost, been preserved by continuous succession in the Catholic Church.' " * It seems to me

* The following is the exact text of the Tridentine Decree: Sacrosancta œcumenica et generalis Tridentina Synodus . . . hoc sibi perpetuo ante oculos proponens, ut sublatis erroribus puritas ipsa evangelii in ecclesia conservetur, quod promissum ante per Prophetas in Scripturis Sanctis Dominus noster Jesus Christus Dei Filius proprio ore primum promulgavit, deinde per suos Apostolos tanquam fontem omnis et salutaris veritatis et morum disciplinæ omni creaturæ prædicari jussit; perspiciciensque hanc veritatem et disciplinam contineri in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditionibus, quæ ipsius Christi ore ab Apostolis acceptæ,

that any traditions that could be identified as *accurately corresponding* to the description given above could be most certainly "proved by" Holy Scripture to have the very same authority which belongs to Holy Scripture itself. Nor can it possibly be denied that our Church recognizes the very great importance of tradition, at least as a quasi-authoritative guide *in the interpretation* of the written Word.* It is extremely hazardous to attempt to determine what the *intention* of the compilers of our Church Formularies may have been. If by the *intention* of a number of persons is meant what each and all of them desired, *neither less nor more*, it may safely be affirmed that the compilers of our Church Formularies had *no intention*. For my own part, I accept the informal decision of the Bishops who represented the Church of England at the Savoy Conference: "It was the wisdom of our reformers to draw up such a liturgy as neither Romanist nor Protestant could justly except against." †

It is implied in the very term *revelation* that it is something imparted to us *in addition to* what we could have discovered by the unaided exercise of our own

aut ab ipsis Apostolis, Spiritu Sancto dictante, quasi per manus traditæ ad nos usque pervenerunt; orthodoxorum Patrum exempla secuta, omnes libros tam veteris quam novi testamenti, quum utriusque unus Deus sit auctor, nec non traditiones ipsas, tum ad fidem, tum ad mores pertinentes, tanquam vel ore tenus a Christo, vel a Spiritu Sancto dictatas, et continua successione in Ecclesia Catholica conservatas, pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia suscipit et veneratur."

*See Newman, *Via Media* i., 288-289, and the passages therein referred to. Newman's criticisms of his own Anglican writings are in the highest degree instructive.

†Cardwell's *Conferences on the Book of Common Prayer*, p. 388.

faculties, or by the exercise of those faculties aided only by that general divine support which is in fact necessary for their continued existence. Moreover, we must distinguish revelation from inspiration; by which last term I understand some exaltation or purification of the human faculties, intellectual or moral, or both, by which the inspired is enabled (to express it briefly) to make the very most of *such materials as are within his reach*. Hence even inspiration, dealing only with the scheme and constitution of Nature, could never rise above Natural Theology. And this seems to me to be what S. Clement of Alexandria means in certain passages which have been interpreted by Mr. Allen (*The Continuity of Christian Thought*, pp. 47-48) in a very different and almost opposite sense. Mr. Allen says:

Because Deity indwelt in humanity, and the human reason partook by its very nature of that which was divine, Clement was forced to see in the highest products of the reason the fruit of divine revelation. He makes no distinction between Natural and Revealed Religion, between what man discovers and God reveals. All that is true and well said in Greek philosophy was as truly given by divine revelation as was the moral truth proclaimed by Jewish legislators and prophets. The higher activities of human thought and reflection are only the process by which the revelation of truth is conveyed to man, and inspiration is the God-given insight which enables men to read aright the truth which God reveals.

In confirmation of his exposition of S. Clement's doctrine he refers to *Exhort.* vi., *Stromat.* i. 5 and i. 10. The value of Mr. Allen's book would have been very greatly increased—possibly also, in some cases, diminished*—if

* I by no means intend this for mere sarcasm. It may well happen that a mere reference may be very infelicitous, and even

references to his authorities had been very much more numerous. It is not always easy, partly for want of such references, to decide whether he is stating the opinion of another or simply expressing his own. But I am quite unable to discover anything *in the passages referred to* in this particular case which in the least justifies Mr. Allen's comment. In these very passages S. Clement seems to refer the wisdom of the philosophers to their acquaintance, directly or indirectly, with the Hebrew *Scriptures*. Thus, for instance (*Strom.* i. 19), after quoting Plato, he immediately adds, "Does he not then seem to declare *from the Hebrew Scriptures* the righteous man's hope, through faith, after death?" And at the very beginning of the same chapter, after quoting *Acts* xvii. 22-28, he proceeds: "Whence it is evident that the Apostle, by availing himself of poetical examples from the *Phænomena* of Aratus, approves of what had been well spoken by the Greeks; and intimates that, by the unknown God, God the Creator was in a roundabout way worshipped by the Greeks; but that it was necessary *by positive knowledge to apprehend and learn Him by the Son.*" And at the end of the chapter, in the midst of sundry mystical interpretations of passages from the *Proverbs*, he says: "I do not think that Philosophy directly declares the Word, although in many instances Philosophy attempts and persuasively teaches us probable arguments." Moreover, the very first para-

divert the attention from the true meaning of a writer who has in his mind a *whole body of literature* from which his opinions are really derived. This may explain Mr. Allen's general omission of references—which nevertheless is, I think, unfortunate, considering what sort of readers alone he is likely to secure.

graph of Chapter V. seems to be absolutely contradictory of Mr. Allen's statement that S. Clement "makes no distinction between Natural and Revealed Religion, between what man discovers and God reveals." "Accordingly," says S. Clement, "before the advent of the Lord, philosophy was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness. And now it becomes conducive to piety; being a kind of preparatory training to those *who attain to faith through demonstration*. 'For thy foot,' it is said, 'will not stumble, if thou refer what is good, whether belonging to the Greeks or to us, to Providence.' For God is the cause of all good things; but of some *primarily, as of the Old and New Testament*; of others by consequence, as philosophy. Perchance, too, philosophy was given to the Greeks directly and primarily *till the Lord should call the Greeks*. For this was a schoolmaster to bring 'the Hellenic mind,' as the law the Hebrews, 'to Christ.' Philosophy, therefore, was a preparation, paving the way for him who is *perfected by Christ*." What is this but saying that our own discoveries are not sufficient; and that no energy of philosophic thought can enable us to dispense with those positive and primary revelations which God has given in the Old and New Testaments—in the truth by Him made known to man, and in those Testaments recorded? Nor need we fear that that divine assistance which God granted to every man in order that he might attain to Natural Religion will be withheld from any of us when we devote ourselves with seriousness and humility to the study of the Sacred Scriptures.

It seems to me an almost incredible perversity of intellect which leads men to object that the special

revelations of God to man have been stored up for us *in a book* and *in a Church*; inasmuch as this is the only conceivable way in which they *could* have been either preserved or propagated. A revelation to each man in the depths of his own being is mere mysticism, and as a matter of fact has certainly not been imparted. This vague mysticism seems to me the great defect—as it is a chief characteristic—of the teaching of Mr. F. D. Maurice; it renders a very large part of that teaching practically inoperative, and to a very large extent wholly unintelligible. That distinguished divine seems positively to resent and suspect clearness of statement. He regards both the Bible and the Church with the profoundest reverence; but the moment you try to explain *what definite service* they render to you, he at once assures you that you understand neither the one nor the other. Take, for instance, this most characteristic passage from a sermon preached at Lincoln's Inn Chapel on the first Sunday after the Epiphany (*What is Revelation?* pp. 8–10. The Collect referred to is the Collect for the Epiphany. If anybody has ever discovered the *answer* to the question which is the title of this book from the book itself, he must be possessed of superhuman ingenuity).

This example is so certainly meant for us, and is so fearful, that there is need continually to press the truth which the Collect suggests. It is the God who manifested His only-begotten Son to the Gentiles who does only, who can only, manifest His Son to us. No book can do it, be it ever so divine; no Church authority or tradition can do it, be it ever so venerable. We must know, not the book, not the tradition, but *Him* by faith. We must trust Him as we trust a father; that is what the Divine Book tells us to do, that is what the Church tells us to do, and its authority and its traditions belie their own origin,

contradict themselves and become blasphemies, if they speak otherwise. If we believe in God habitually as a living Person, if we seek Him as a refuge from our own atheism, from our own idolatry, from that in us which is most utterly contrary to Him—our self-will, our pride, our spite and malice—we shall know Him really, as one knows a friend, not by seeing Him with the eyes, not by getting reports of Him or traditions of Him from others, be those reports ever so trustworthy, be those traditions ever so reasonable and credible, but by experiencing His help, by finding out how much better He is than we are, and yet how well He understands what we are and cares for us. To exchange for this practical faith, which rests upon God Himself and His own manifestation of Himself in the Son of God and the Son of man, a belief in the Holy Book, is to disobey all the warnings of that Book, to show that we do not know what is in it, that we prize it as a name or a watchword, not for that which it teaches. To exchange for this practical faith a belief in the Church—a notion that the Church will tell us the right thing and will bring us to heaven—is to show that we do not know what it is to be members of a Church, or what a Church is good for; that we do not prize it because it leads us to the Rock on which it stands, to the God who has called it out to be a witness of His revelation of Himself to mankind, of His redemption of mankind, but because we suppose it is ours, and that it gives us some privilege and glory which other men want. This is to exalt ourselves and to deny God.

There is a mystic, poetic beauty, a soft, mellowing haze, in this passage which we must all appreciate; but what, after all, does it mean? Who has ever asked us to transfer our trust in God Himself to the Book which contains His message; or who has ever pretended that trust in a book is the same thing as trust in a person? The question is not: Shall we believe in God, *or* believe the Book which contains the revelation of His character and will? That is not the question, but this: Can we possibly do the one without the

other? And the answer to this question is: Most unquestionably we cannot. We cannot, being sane, *believe in* a person, trust him, reverence him, love him, without knowing something about him. You say you believe in God apart from, wholly independently of, the revelations contained in the Holy Scriptures. Well and good. But what do you know about Him? And how did you acquire that knowledge? Clearly from those sources from which are derived the truths of Natural Religion; for apart from Holy Scripture these are the *only* sources of our knowledge; and how pitifully inadequate they are we have already seen. But you say: "No, indeed! I believe in God as revealed to us in Jesus Christ." Very good, I repeat; but what do you know about Jesus Christ? How do you know that such a Person ever lived? *Jesus Christ* is not only "God of God," but God *incarnate*; "made flesh, and tabernacling among us." As such—that is to say, as *Jesus Christ*—He came into the world at a particular time and place—viz.: in Palestine, and about nineteen hundred years ago. His *earthly* life and ministry—which were His *revelation* of God to men—ended when "He ascended up where He was before." When He was visibly, audibly, tangibly in this world, multitudes of people saw Him, heard Him, touched Him; but we were not in the world then, and never can be in the world at that time and place. *Everything*, therefore, that we can know about that revelation of God which is given us in the Incarnation must be derived from trustworthy *records*; and the only existing records are the Scriptures of the New Testament.

It is the doctrine of the whole Western Church,

including the Anglican and the American, that the Sacred Scriptures—*supplemented* by tradition derived, hypothetically, from the very same sources, and therefore possessed of the very same authority; or partly *interpreted* by traditions regarded as historic evidence—“contain all things,” *i. e.* all truths, “necessary to salvation.” But it is not the doctrine of the Western Church that the Sacred Scriptures contain *nothing else*. This may, indeed, be affirmed, or directly involved, in the creeds, confessions or doctrinal formularies of some extreme Protestant sects; but with these I am not concerned. Much less am I concerned with the vague and inaccurate opinions of wholly irresponsible individuals. And it is of the greatest importance to bear this constantly in mind. The object of revelation is to put us in possession of truths necessary to salvation—*i. e.*, necessary to our redemption from sin and our spiritual perfection. But these revelations recorded in Scripture are inclosed in an historical setting; and this history explains their occasion, and sometimes, indirectly, their meaning. But it is not “necessary to salvation” that there should not be even the minutest error in the mere history. Thus the divine government of Israel was a fact of history, including the disciplinary sojourn in Egypt; and it may certainly be regarded as “necessary to salvation” that we realize the fact of a divine government in general, and of the divine government of Israel in particular. But *this* truth is not at all affected by a difference in the calculation of the exact number of years during which the Israelites were in Egypt. The reckoning of S. Stephen may differ, by a few years, from the reckoning in the Pentateuch; but that difference does not in the

least affect the spiritual significance of the whole narrative. Similarly, no moral or religious truth would be in the least imperiled if it should be discovered that the description of Goliath's armour was not minutely accurate; the length of his spear or the weight of his shield are, religiously, a kind of surplusage. That "God created the heavens and the earth" is a truth "necessary to salvation"; but that He created them in a particular order or during a particular time is not. Hence, when Mr. Huxley writes, in his delicious style, a complete demolition of Mr. Gladstone's *scientific* defense of the first chapter of *Genesis*, we may look on with perfect unconcern. Hundreds of similar examples might easily be given.

But when we have exhausted our own ingenuity in inventing "difficulties" and "objections," or when we have been sufficiently tormented by the difficulties and objections urged by other people more ingenious than ourselves; when we have spent long enough time in dealing with the Sacred Scriptures as if they were no more than a literary or scientific problem; we are at last confronted with these two questions, which concern us not as critics or logicians, but as human beings who "must give an account of ourselves before God": Do the Sacred Scriptures contain all truths necessary to salvation? If they do, they are *sufficient*. Do any other books or sets of books contain all truths necessary to salvation? If not, the Scriptures are *necessary*.* For my own part, I have not an atom of doubt that they are both necessary and sufficient.

* I suppose I must add, what everybody with a grain of sense would take for granted, necessary "where they may be had." As *we* not only may, but most unquestionably do, possess them, they are—on the supposition—necessary *for us*.

The second question is the easier to answer, and I will consider it first. Is there any book or set of books except the Bible which contains "all truths necessary to salvation"? And in answering this question we must rigorously exclude all books dealing in any way with religion which are to a great extent themselves derived from the Bible. In other words, we must exclude all the literature of modern Europe. We must even exclude—if it mattered, which it does not—the Koran, which is largely derived from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures or traditions. Even the works of professed sceptics are saturated with Christianity. If that soaring eagle has been brought to the ground, it has unquestionably been by arrows winged by her own feathers. Hundreds of passages of Scripture are cited as "anthropomorphic," "anthropathic," involving a low morality or a rudimentary and false theology. This is not the place for a minute exegesis of such passages. They are nearly all examples of that progressive and gradual revelation of which I have spoken in the four *Sermons* to which this Supplementary Essay is a note. But what is *the test* by which they are judged and found wanting? Most unquestionably *other portions of the very same Scriptures* from which they have been selected for condemnation. Whence do we derive our clearest knowledge of the spiritual nature of God and His moral perfections? If we want to refute Moses we must quote S. John. But I am already anticipating the answer to the other question with which I shall be immediately confronted. *What* other books, then, if the Bible fail us, contain "all things necessary to salvation"; the truth concerning God; the convincing proof of our own

sinfulness; the assurance of pardon, if we repent and amend and put "our whole trust and confidence in God's mercy," and avail ourselves of the means of recovery which He has provided; the overpowering motives which shall conquer our selfishness, and set us forth on the high and heroic achievement of the spiritual perfection of which our nature is capable; the assurance of a brotherhood which shall enable us to "lay down our lives for the brethren"; the "sure and certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life"? Where else have we a Gospel for *mankind*—not for philosophers and for elect souls, but for "barbarian, Scythian, bond and free"? Can we find it in Plato's *Republic*, in the *Homeric Poems*, in the agnostic and utilitarian teachings of Confucius, in the "Sacred Books of the East"? All these have had "a fair field," and many of them much "favour." What would become of human society if any statesman should dare to propose, and any nation dare to consent, to make Plato's *Republic* the basis of practical legislation—with its community of goods and women, and the immense majority of its citizens left to a hopeless and cheerless life of drudgery and contempt? What would become of our salvation—not in any narrow, "evangelical" sense, but as meaning our spiritual perfection—if we seriously believed that the amours of Ares and Aphrodite, at which Homer tells us the gods shook with inextinguishable laughter, were the manifestations of a divine perfection which it is the perfection of man to imitate? What sort of spiritual refinement, what high ideals, what unearthly beauty of character and temper, has Confucius bestowed upon the Chinese? What, at this very moment, are the religious and the social conditions of the inhabitants of India?

Discovery has been exhausted; other adequate *revelations* there are none; if the Bible be not sufficient we are left in hopeless misery, and in utter ignorance of the way of "eternal life."

Of the *sufficiency* of the revelation which is contained in the Sacred Scriptures I have spoken already—I am only too conscious how imperfectly—in the four *Sermons* to which this Essay is a note. And I may remark that that sufficiency is not a doubtful inference, but a plain fact, which we know from wide observation, from the sure evidence of undisputed history, and from personal experience. Christianity has "turned the world upside down." The world, so far as it has been permeated and saturated with Christianity, is a world altogether different from that of which we read in the Greek and Roman historians, philosophers, poets, dramatists, satirists; and that difference *is* the sufficiency of the divine revelations. It is not simply that the world has been made better, though that is true; but it has been made utterly ashamed of vices which were once not only universal, but unabashed. "It was before the once grave and pure-minded Senators of Rome—the greatness of whose State was founded on the sanctity of family relationships—that the Censor Metellus had declared in A. U. C. 602, without one dissentient murmur, that marriage could only be regarded as an intolerable necessity. Before that same Senate, at an earlier period, a leading Consular had not scrupled to assert that there was scarcely one among them all who had not ordered one or more of his own infant children to be exposed to death."* In what Christian city could a new Petro-

* Farrar, *The Early Days of Christianity*, Book I., Chap. 1 ;

nus Arbiter find either the material or the effrontery for a new *Satyrium*? A poet whose own verses furnish all too conclusive evidence of the moral condition of the men of culture and refinement in his day—and of the women—tells us that

“ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.”*

But as a matter of fact the manners of the gentlemen, the philosophers, even the “ladies,” of the Roman Empire at the time of the first propagation of the Gospel, were not only morally loathsome, but savagely brutal.

But why enlarge upon what everybody knows? The power of Christianity, of the truths recorded in the Sacred Scriptures, is not an inference, it is a palpable fact that no one can deny. It has created a new world, it has made millions of human beings separately and individually “new creatures.” And are we really to suspend our judgment about its inestimable preciousness, nay even to doubt its very truth, because S. Stephen did not add up correctly the years of the Egyptian bondage, or because we cannot understand an obscure passage in the Epistle of S. Jude? Is it any disproof of the splendid military genius of Napoleon that he sometimes lost a battle, that many of his generals were far inferior to himself, that his manners were sometimes rough and his treatment of women

and consult the terrific authorities by which he supports his statements. What a world of meaning is in these two lines!—

Si mos antiquis placuisset matribus idem,
Gens hominum vitio deperitura fuit.

(Ovid, *Amorum* ii. 14)

* Ovid, *Ep. ex Ponto*, 2, 9, 47-48.

unrefined? The answer to such carping criticism, if anybody were foolish enough seriously to offer it, is simple, intelligible, irresistible: it is *the map of Europe* as Napoleon *found* it, and the map of Europe as Napoleon *left* it.

But whence came this new power into the world? Are we to be seriously asked to believe that it was a stage in a process of natural evolution? How can that be a stage in a process of natural evolution which violently arrests the process? We know what evolution was actually doing for the Jews, the Greeks, the Romans, at that very time. The evolution was all downwards, a process of corruption. But I am arguing here only with those who admit the primary assumption of "an intelligent Author of Nature, with a character and a will." For the rest—those who repudiate that assumption—I may say, in the words of Newman: "I cannot convert men, when I ask for assumptions which they refuse to grant to me; and without assumptions no one can prove anything about anything." And, again, he says—after quoting Aristotle and the Bible (*Grammar of Assent*, pp. 415–416):

Relying, then, on these authorities, human and divine, I have no scruple in beginning the review I shall take of Christianity by professing to consult for those only whose minds are properly prepared for it; and by being prepared I mean those who are imbued with the religious opinions and sentiments which I have identified with Natural Religion. I do not address myself to those who, in moral evil and physical, see nothing more than imperfections of a parallel nature, who consider that the difference in gravity between the two is one of degree only, not of kind; that moral evil is merely the offspring of physical, and that as we remove the latter so we inevitably remove the former;

that there is a progress of the race which tends to the annihilation of moral evil ; that sin is a bugbear, not a reality ; that the Creator does not punish, except in the sense of correcting ; that vengeance in Him would of necessity be vindictiveness ; that all that we know of Him, be it much or little, is through the laws of Nature ; that miracles are impossible ; that prayer to Him is a superstition ; that the fear of Him is unmanly ; that sorrow for sin is slavish and abject ; that the only intelligible worship of Him is to act well our part in the world, and the only sensible repentance to do better in future ; that if we do our duties in this life, we may take our chance for the next ; and that it is of no use perplexing our minds about the future state, for it is all a matter of guess. These opinions characterize a civilized age ; and if I say that I will not argue about Christianity with men who hold them, I do so, not as claiming any right to be impatient or peremptory with any one, but because it is plainly absurd to attempt to prove a second proposition to those who do not admit the first.

REMARKS ON DR. MAUDSLEY'S "NATURAL
CAUSES AND SUPERNATURAL
SEEMINGS."

Dr. Maudsley's treatment of religion—he does not deign to notice that *the Christian religion* differs essentially from witchcraft and omens and the like—is so arrogant and indecent, that I freely admit that it is more than possible that I am unfavorably prejudiced against his opinions in general. But I think I can, without bias, examine some of his theories which do not strictly belong either to science or religion; and, of course, for that particular purpose it is not in the least necessary that I should be myself a scientist—which I am not. If a man says "Yes is no," I need not ask what the "yes" is, or what the "no"; I know that the proposition is self-contradictory, whatever its terms may be. When Dr. Maudsley now and then condescends to come down from his high throne of scientific infallibility and discuss, for instance, such questions as *belief*—even with ignorant people who never knew that belief was a molecular movement in the substance of the brain—I think anybody who is in the habit of carefully inspecting the operations of his own mind is competent to criticise him. Here, then, is his account of the purely intellectual act or process which we call belief (p. 17):

It is with beliefs as it is with movements, the right belief, like the right movement, being that which has been acquired

by the suitable adaptation to former like circumstances, and now fits with most exactness present circumstances; true, therefore, if they are essentially like, untrue if they are unlike. To ask a person to believe otherwise than according to his uniform experience, is like asking a skilful purposive movement which has been acquired with great pains, by special training, to adapt itself suddenly to the accomplishment of something quite different; and to ask him not to apply old beliefs to the apprehension of new facts, is like asking a man not to use for the grasping of a new object the most fit movements which he is capable of, because they are not entirely fit. He must use the old motor apprehension or grasp until he has fitted himself with a new one, which he gains by gradual adaptation. So it is with beliefs: he cannot choose but make use of the old belief, though it does not fit exactly; but in doing so he ought to take great care to see exactly wherein it does not fit, and proceed to modify it accordingly. Does it err by falling short of, or by being in excess of, the facts? And is it necessary to add to it or to take from it, or otherwise to modify it?

Here Dr. Maudsley asserts that *belief* is acquired like dexterous muscular movements. For instance, somebody tells me that John Smith has shot himself, and is dead. I go to his house, see his dead body, and hear the story of the circumstances of his death. Dr. Maudsley seems to affirm that, in such a case, I have to *practise believing*, like learning to play on the piano. John Smith's suicide is a new experience. I can only get hold of that experience by "making use of the old belief" that John Smith *is still alive*; and by pounding away at that belief, and by "fitting to it" the new experience, I shall gradually come to be sure that John Smith is not alive at all, but shot himself through the heart.

But nothing can be more remote from personal experience—that is to say, what we are conscious of in

the act of believing—than this theory of belief, and in such a matter personal experience is the ultimate and only test of the truth of the theory. Whately says, giving an example of a proposition, that "naturalists have observed that 'animals having horns on the head are universally ruminant.'" Otherwise—"All horned animals are ruminant." I do not know whether this proposition is true or not; but, in either case, it will serve equally well as a proposition by which to test Dr. Maudsley's theory of belief—which is, that belief is acquired, like muscular dexterity, by repeated efforts. Before belief of Whately's proposition is so much as possible, the person who considers it must know the meaning of its terms, "horned" and "ruminant." He must know the effect of the predication—viz.: that every horned animal is to be found among the class of animals that ruminate. Whether this be true or not, he must decide either by personal observation, or by testimony, or by both. *When* he has ascertained its truth, he *immediately* and *perfectly* believes it. He does not acquire his belief by *believing over and over again*, as a man acquires the muscular dexterity of playing on the piano by continual practice.

Take another example (p. 33):

To every one a *thing* is neither more nor less than what he *thinks* it—in effect, a *think*; and to think a new thing he must first use the old thought. How can he do otherwise before new experience has enabled him to organize a new *think*? The old *thing* or *think* represents object *plus* subject. The thing, therefore, is no thing to him until it is asselled in a think, for until then it is object *minus* subject. And this is true also of all the properties and relations of the object. If he tells or foretells anything of it or of them, he must do it in terms of the language which he knows, obviously cannot do it in terms

of a language which he has yet to learn. In applying, then, the old notion to a new fact, as he must necessarily apply some notion to it in order to observe it intelligently at all, he uses a notion which, not fitting the fact exactly, comes between him and it, in so far as it is unfit, and so hinders him from getting into exact and faithful converse with it; instead of being a completely fitting instrument to accomplish the adaptation, it is an interposing obstacle, to the extent of its unsuitableness, which hinders his mind from moulding itself plastically to the fact.

Now, after carefully pondering this remarkable passage, let us call to mind that Dr. Maudsley is a scientist—*i. e.*, he is a man whose professional business it is to investigate phenomena cognizable by the senses. If, therefore, he ever arrives at the knowledge of thought at all—which is *not* cognizable by the senses—it must be either by a primary, extra-scientific assumption, or by an irresistible inference from what he has observed of "things." Now, in the passage I have quoted above, Dr. Maudsley seems exactly to reverse this process. Instead of beginning with a thing—a really existing object—and getting an accurate knowledge of it through the senses, and so arriving at a clear thought about it, he begins with a thought. Nay more, he *identifies* the thought and the thing; so that, in fact, there is either no *thing* to investigate or no *think* to investigate it with, and knowledge is impossible. Again, on Dr. Maudsley's theory, knowledge is impossible for another reason. To think a new thing, he says, we must use an old thought. But there must have been a time when we—or if we inherit "thought" as a part of our "mental structure," when our remotest ancestor—had no thought at all, and came unequipped by previous knowledge,

with nothing but our senses and intellect, to the examination of the first fact that presented itself for our inspection. Having no old thought; Dr. Maudsley assures us that it was impossible to think the new thing. Knowledge, therefore, was barred out at the very first stage, and, for the very same reason, at every subsequent stage. I am not at all sure that I perceive Dr. Maudsley's real meaning, and I doubt whether he perceived it himself. I have never met with the word *asselfed* (so far as I can remember) in any English book, or heard it from any human lips, and have no notion what it is meant to stand for. But I will suppose myself "put in face of a new fact" which I desire to investigate, so as to get an accurate knowledge of what it really is; which knowledge, when I have acquired it, may be regarded as a thought or a connected series of thoughts. There are already in my mind a great multitude of thoughts or series of thoughts similarly obtained; say, for example, the thought, notion, mental representation of a camel. And let me suppose that the new fact I am "put in face of" is a frog. Now, in order to ascertain how I am to obtain a clear knowledge of the frog, so as to be able to carry about with me in my mind a true conception or representation of it, I will paraphrase Dr. Maudsley's paragraph; using "frog" for the new fact, and "camel" (any other would do as well: snail, for instance, or toad) for "the old thought." "To every one a [frog] is neither more nor less than what he *thinks* it—in effect, a *think*"; that is to say, a living animal is a mental process, "neither more nor less"; "and to think a [frog] he must first use [the camel]. How can he do otherwise before new experience has enabled him to organize a

new *think*?" I have not the faintest notion of what is meant by "organizing a *think*"; but Dr. Maudsley *seems* to me to mean that you cannot get the accurate mental representation of anything until you have gone over it in your mind a great many times. But *what* do you go over in your mind so often? Why, the very "*think*" that you cannot get at all until you have "organized" it. In other words, Dr. Maudsley seems to mean that you must create the "*think*" by not only having it, but frequently using it. This reminds me, as many other passages in this book do, of the stage-direction in the old German *Miracle-Play*: "Enter *Adam* and *Eve*, who cross the stage *going to be created*." But to proceed: "The old thing or think [the camel] represents object *plus* subject; the new thing [frog], therefore, is no thing to him until it is asselfed in a think, for until then it is object *minus* subject." Perhaps, after all, these wonderful words only mean that you cannot know a thing until you do know it, or see it until it comes within the range of vision. "In applying, then, the old notion [camel] to a new fact [frog], as he must necessarily apply some notion [and camel is just as good as any other, such as hippopotamus or flea] to it in order to observe it intelligently at all, he uses a notion which, not fitting the fact exactly, . . . hinders his mind from moulding itself plastically to the fact." Then why, in the name of science, does he apply "the old notion" at all? Why can he not devote his attention to *the frog* and leave the camel in its native desert? But of this anon. Meanwhile, having insisted upon bringing his camel with him, "what, then, must he do?" I am now quoting from the paragraph immediately following the one quoted above: "Putting

himself resolutely into close converse with the new experience [the frog], he must hold his notion [the camel] loosely, as of provisional use and susceptible of modification, or lay it clean aside, bringing other more serviceable notions to his assistance [such, perhaps, as snake, lizard, fish], in order to get a full and faithful impression of the facts [what facts?] in that wherein they disagree from or contradict his prepossessions." . . .

Now, I had always thought that this way of acquiring the knowledge of a fact or phenomenon—viz.: by interposing between the fact and our own minds a multitude of "notions"—was the very road at the head of which science had long ago put up a large sign-board with, in very big letters, the words "Dangerous: this road leads directly to a deep quagmire which it is almost impossible for anybody to cross." But, as Dr. Maudsley has taken the sign-board down, let us venture forward, camel and all—all the other possibly "serviceable notions"—hoping to get safe over. Our little frog hops into sight, and we say, "Aha! that is a camel!" We take the little creature into our hands: it feels coldish, it has no hair, no hump, no long ears, no tail or hoofs. Our "old notion" does not "fit exactly." So we remember that it is "susceptible of modification"; and we find so much to modify that at last we have nothing more of the camel left than a tuft of hair enough to hang on by. But *that*, of course, is not *the frog*; so we reverse the process of subtraction and begin to add, one after another, the various parts and organs of the frog, our "new experience." We continue this process until we have obtained the entire frog *plus* the tuft of hair. This still does not "fit exactly," so we throw the tuft of hair away, and we have all the frog with none of the camel.

Now, the question is—and it is not a question lying within the special domain of the scientists, but one which anybody who has ever acquired knowledge is, by simple and careful introspection, as capable of answering as Dr. Maudsley—"Is this, or is it not, the process by which we do acquire the knowledge of a hitherto unknown fact or phenomenon?" Most undeniably it is not. When we see a frog for the first time, we do not warily catch him, put him in a jar, and then go to the nearest zoological gardens for a dozen or two of old "thinks" which may be "serviceable" to us in our investigation of the frog. We just watch *the frog*, see him hop about, notice what he eats, watch him swim across a pond. We catch him, examine him carefully. Perhaps, next, we cut him open and examine also his interior organs; we may use for this purpose a microscope, and so on. We never once think of a camel; we get as close as we possibly can to *the frog itself*; and when we have got through our investigation we have a notion, conception, mental representation of the frog available for all future purposes. The frog has not ceased to be a *thing*, but it has become also, for us, to use the grotesque language of Dr. Maudsley, "*a think*."

Of course it is only too probable that I have mistaken the meaning of the passage on which I have been commenting. If I have, it is not because I am not a scientist, for there is nothing in the passage which has anything to do with physical science; except, perhaps, the possibly implied assertion that Dr. Maudsley, as an anatomist, has discovered in the human brain, or elsewhere, a number of "organized thinks"; which perhaps he may have described, with

the aid of diagrams, and with a minute account of their specific gravity, chemical composition, colour, and the like, in some scientific treatise of which I have never heard. But could anybody discover in the writings of Darwin, or Huxley, or Tyndall, a piece of English (excluding the word *asself*, which is not English) to match the obscurity of this extract?

I will take one other example of Dr. Mandsley's obscurity combined with wholly unverified, and confidently affirmed, "scientific" hypotheses. I scarcely know which to select. I might take his account of *Attention* (pp. 61-67), or of *Imagination*; the latter is peculiarly rich in suggestions. Consider the following passage (pp. 135-136):

At the risk of being thought fanciful, I may venture to carry the physical comparison a step further. What is the equivalent on the physical side—for such equivalent there must be—what the nervous substratum of an act of imagination? We learn from the physiologists that the nervous substratum of thought is, directly or indirectly, a nervous tract in connection with an ingoing sensory and an outgoing motor channel—what they call a reflex arc—in the cerebral plane. How can imagination have any place in such a process, which, though it may increase in strength, can never go outside its own track, never transcend experience? Perhaps it is, when imagination works, that there is a production of new nerve-junctions or nerve-tracks from the old stocks or tracks of thought, or, if not an actual production, the bringing into use, for the formation of junctions, of nerve-cells lying around in all states of incomplete development. These new elements will testify necessarily of the special qualities of their immediate parents, being rich in rare qualities and full of vigour and promise when these are well informed by good experience and sound training, but feeble and poor and futile when the basis of sound experience and thought is wanting; and when they form apt organic unions or junctions between proper nerve-tracks, they lay the physical basis of fresh com-

binations of ideas, bright flashes of new conceptions, prophetic anticipations of subsequent experience. It is not, anyhow, as some thoughtlessly conclude, imagination which starts the organic process: it is the organic process which is the condition of imagination. That currents pass along neighbouring tracks and run into adjacent nerve-terminals (where the nerve loses its isolating sheath and ends indistinguishably in the tissue) is certain; it is not improbable, therefore, that when, accumulating there, they attain by intensification of qualities or nearness of approach a certain attraction, they break through the impeding matter and rush together, making an organized path by coercing the elemental units into definite positions, temporary or permanent.

Is it possible that this rhapsody can be seriously intended for a contribution to *physical science*? "Perhaps . . . when imagination works"! But we need no anatomist to tell us what *imagination* does when "it works." It produces *Homeric Poems*, *Hamlet*, and such like. Dr. Maudsley, however, professes to be investigating, *not* imagination, *but* "the nervous substratum of an act of imagination." Has he ever, as anatomist or physiologist, discovered that "nervous substratum"? can he distinguish it from other "nervous tracts," or cells, or fibres? But, be this as it may, how *can* a "nervous substratum of an act of imagination" "*produce*" or "*bring into use*" anything whatever? One might as well say that "a calcareous or ligneous substratum" produces a house; or "brings into use" masons and carpenters and mortar and nails. It seems there are lying about in the brain, "in all states of incomplete development," nerve-cells—like big stones in the bed of a shallow river—and *imagination* (here adroitly substituted for its "nervous substratum") skips over the river by the help of these convenient stepping-stones, carrying with it ropes or

building materials, and "makes an organized path by coercing the elemental units"—what are "the elemental units"?—"into definite positions, temporary or permanent." And *this* is supposed to be more reasonable, and more capable of scientific verification, than the Christian religion! It is, at any rate, a most conspicuous example of science in the anthropomorphic, and purely hypothetical, stage.

But the passage I had in my mind—these others, among many which I had marked, arrested my attention in looking for it—is the following (p. 37):

The perception of analogies and resemblances in Nature leads easily to generalizations, which are afterwards verified or not. If the generalization be not verified because of the contradictory or irreconcilable instance presenting itself, then this dissentient experience, if taken sincerely home and registered faithfully in the mind, is organized there into a new organ or faculty, so to speak, and thereafter assimilates its likes. A new track of function is opened, to which associations or, as it were, junctions are formed in due course; a rich addition being thus made to the cerebral plexus of the mental organization.

I am again baffled, in my attempt to get at the real meaning of this passage, not only by its vagueness, but by a kind of poetic anthropomorphism which, however beautiful, does not easily submit itself either to scientific or logical restraints. It is perfectly obvious that if we could deal with or sufficiently describe everything *in rerum natura* only when taken separately, the words of a language would be very far more numerous than the sum of all existing things. We observe, however, that the things around us, though no two of them are exactly alike, may yet be divided into groups, on the ground of a *general* resemblance. We, therefore, by a process called *abstraction*, withdraw or divert our attention

from the minor differences which, for any given purpose—though, for other purposes, they may be essential—we do not think it worth while to notice; arranging in separate classes those things all of which possess certain properties or qualities. We invent a name which shall connote exactly those properties or qualities, and no others, and we give that name to each member of the class so characterized. This is, I believe, the process of *generalization*; and the name arising out of this process is a *general* or *common* name. Thus, for instance, we find an immense number of animals possessing the following characteristics: "An undivided hoof formed of the third toe and its enlarged horny nail, a single stomach, a mane on the neck, six incisor teeth in each jaw, seven molars on either side of both jaws, two small canine teeth in the upper jaw of the males (and sometimes in both jaws), no bands of blackish-brown, no black dorsal line, long hair on the tail, and warts on both pairs of limbs." We invent the name *horse* to connote these properties or characteristics, and to every animal possessing them we give that name. Now, what could be meant by "verifying" this generalization? Clearly making such careful observations as should satisfy us that there does, or does not, really exist a number of animals with these characteristics. But this is not what I think Dr. Maudsley means by "verifying" a generalization. What I think he does mean I will try to make plain by a concrete illustration. A *very* raw farm-hand comes and tells me that he has driven all the *horses* into a yard and shut them up. "Very well," I say; "bring two of them out and have the carriage ready, and I will see what they are good for." He brings two out,

and while he is trying to harness them I find that one of them is a *cow*. This cow, then, would correspond, I think, to Dr. Maudsley's "contradictory or irreconcilable instance," or "dissentient experience"; and clearly it is of great importance that I should be so familiar with the difference between them as not to harness a cow to my carriage or send a horse to the dairy-farm.

But now we come to the anthropomorphic poetry—the Nemesis of Science. The "dissentient experience"—in the illustration given above, the mental representation of a cow—is to be "taken sincerely home and registered faithfully in the mind." It is then "organized into a new organ or faculty." But what is the use of the new organ or faculty, even if it should be produced, of which there is not the smallest atom of evidence? Is it an organ or faculty by means of which I distinguish a cow from a horse? But I possess that faculty already. It was by the very use of that faculty that I really did distinguish the particular cow that I "took sincerely home"; it was that very faculty which enabled me to "take it" there, "and register it faithfully in my mind." Nevertheless, it may be well to have two strings to my bow, though one might serve. Next, however, the new (duplicate) "organ," which apparently has organized itself, produces this effect: "A new track of function [what, precisely, is a "track of function"?) is opened, to which associations or, as it were, junctions are formed in due course; a rich addition being thus made to the cerebral plexus of the mental organization." Does Dr. Maudsley really mean to be taken seriously, or is he trying to "fool" theologians "to the top of their bent"?

He surely does not mean that the "mental organization" is different from and independent of the bodily organization; having a cerebrum and spinal cord, and perhaps kidneys and liver, of its own. He probably means "the cerebral plexus (plexuses?)" which are the "nervous substratum" of mental operations. So we may omit the "mental organization," and inquire into *the evidence* for the assertion that a particular kind of mental operation produces "a rich addition to the cerebral plexus." Now, both these terms, *cerebral* and *plexus*, have a perfectly definite meaning.

It is hardly necessary to say anything about the meaning of the word *cerebral*; but what is a *plexus*? I will give a definition and an example from a very well-known text-book, *The Anatomist's Vade Mecum*, by Erasmus Wilson (Ninth Edition, 1873). Here is the definition: "A plexus is an intricate intercommunication between the funiculi of adjacent nerves" (p. 435). Here is an example, of which I quote enough to answer my very simple purpose:

The *brachial* or *axillary plexus* of nerves is formed by communications between the anterior cords of the four lower cervical nerves and first dorsal. These nerves are alike in size, and their mode of disposition in the formation of the plexus as follows: The fifth and sixth unite to form a common trunk; the last cervical and first dorsal also unite to form a single trunk; the seventh cervical nerve lies for some distance apart from the rest, and then divides into two branches, which join the other cords. At the point of junction the plexus consists of two cords, from which a third is given off, and the three become placed, one to the inner side of the axillary artery, one behind, and one to its outer side. Lower down, each of the lateral cords gives off a branch which unites with its fellow in front of the artery, and surrounds the vessel, the trunk formed by the union of the two branches being the median nerve. The plexus is broad in

the neck, narrows as it descends into the axilla, and again enlarges at its lower part, where it divides into its terminal branches.

Whether or not there is in the cerebrum itself "an intricate intercommunication between the funiculi of adjacent nerves," I do not pretend to know. As Dr. Maudsley speaks of a "cerebral plexus," of course there is. But the point to which I wish to direct attention is this: that a plexus, whether cerebral, aortic, cervical, diaphragmatic, or any other, is visible, tangible, measurable, and can be dissected out. Any "rich addition" to it, to say nothing of new "tracts" and "connections," will be a "rich addition" to its size. If it were increased several million-fold it might be as big as a coil of rope. If *any* "rich addition," or even moderately poor "addition," were made to it, the anatomist would infallibly discover it; he would write about it to the *Lancet* or in the *Transactions* of some scientific Association; he would dissect it out, and have it preserved in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons. Now, the mental operation which Dr. Maudsley says makes a "rich addition to the cerebral plexus"—viz.: carefully noting the slight differences which should prevent our including some object in a particular class—is an operation performed thousands of times over by every human being. In the composition of a single Budget for the British Empire Mr. Gladstone performs this operation often enough, one might think, to absolutely fill his skull with "cerebral plexus," and kill himself, so to speak, by cerebral suffocation. And this amazing theory is only a particular case of Dr. Maudsley's general theory of the relation of mind to its "nervous substratum." That

general theory, so far as I understand it, is this: that we begin life with a sufficient nervous substratum for our first mental operations; that these mental operations enlarge their old, or produce new, physical organs—with tracts, connections, and all the rest of it. Now, a *physical* organ must have some *size*; if it be increased, its *size* is increased; if new organs be produced, they also must occupy some definite *space*. At the end of a long life, therefore, the "nervous substratum" of mind must be many millions of times larger than it was to begin with; Mr. Gladstone's must be to-day many millions of times greater than it was when first the bones of his skull had become consolidated. Now, what particle of evidence is there for this theory? So far as my reading has extended, I have discovered not an atom. The fact that Mr. Gladstone's skull was not long ago burst open is a positive disproof. And when, for the purpose of holding up the Christian religion to contempt, Dr. Maudsley offers us these unverifiable hypotheses as "science," he sinks below the level of an old Roman who affirmed that his good luck was caused by his happening to see a flight of birds in a particular region of the heavens.

Absurd and demonstrably false as these theories seem to me to be, they are to be found in the works of nearly all the physiological-psychologists with which I am acquainted. The object of these writers is not to furnish an exact account of the anatomy and physiology of the brain and nervous system; which they are abundantly qualified to do, which is obviously within the true limits of science, and in which they are far beyond any criticism of mine. But their object is to determine the physical conditions, or invariable physi-

cal antecedents, accompaniments or consequents of mental operations. They so often speak of matter in terms of mind, and of mind in terms of matter, that it might be supposed they regard mind and matter as substantially identical. But, on the other hand, the very attempt to ascertain the relation between the two implies that they are substantially different. This is clearly admitted by Dr. Bain, who is indeed more a psychologist than a physiologist; and the distinction he draws between the two is precisely that with which we are all familiar. Mind we know—or at least the operations of mind—by direct consciousness, from which there is no appeal. Matter we know by observation, and especially by observing that its properties are wholly incommensurable with the properties or operations of mind. He says (*Mind and Body*, in the *International Scientific Series*, pp. 124–125):

I repeat, what a piece of matter is, what an operation of mind is, we know equally well; we see that they both agree and differ from other kinds of matter, and from other operations of mind. There is a much closer kindred between material facts among themselves, and between mental facts among themselves, than between material facts generally and mental facts generally. Hence, we resolve all the facts of Nature ultimately into two kinds—matter and mind; and we do not resolve these into anything higher. We come upon a wider contrast at this point than we had in any prior stage of our generalizing movement. The plants and the animals differ widely in their details; both differ still more widely from inanimate matter. Yet they agree in all the principal features of material bodies, and are in total opposition to mind, which has neither the distinctive features of either nor the common attributes of both. The inanimate and the animate are not so different as body and mind. Extension is but the first of a long series of properties all present in matter, all absent in mind. INERTIA cannot

belong to a pleasure, a pain, an idea, as experienced in the consciousness; it can belong only to the physical accompaniments of mind—the overt acts of volition, and the manifestations of feeling. Inertia is accompanied with GRAVITY, a peculiarly material property. So COLOUR is a truly material property: it cannot attach to a feeling, properly so called, a pleasure or a pain. These three properties are the basis of matter; to them are superadded FORM, MOTION, POSITION, and a host of other properties expressed in terms of these—attractions and repulsions, hardness, elasticity, cohesion, crystallization, heat, light, electricity, chemical properties, organized properties (in special kinds of matter).

But when physiologists attempt to explain the physical basis or substratum, or cause or effect of mental operations—such as remembering—they seem to me to fall into the very absurdities which I have pointed out above. Even Dr. Bain's theory in *Body and Mind* seems to me to imply them. The physical *rationale* of memory, so far as I can understand the terms in which it is expressed, seems to me to be approximately this: The mental act of remembering produces in the brain a nerve-track, which becomes more and more firm the oftener it is used; which accounts for the fact that what we have recalled to mind hundreds of times before, we can now recollect almost without an effort. To quote Dr. Bain again (p. 91): "As to the mechanism of retention: for every act of memory, every exercise of bodily aptitude, every habit, recollection, train of ideas, there is a specific grouping, or co-ordination, of sensations and movements by virtue of specific growths in the cell-junctions." Now, *cells* are *real things*. Dr. Bain gives diagrams of them. The brain of a boy eight years old contains a certain definite number of these cells—

neither more nor fewer. If for the purpose of mental "retention" a certain number of them are arranged in a particular order, there will be so many fewer left for other purposes. By degrees, as he learns his lessons, to say nothing of the recollections and retentions of his ordinary boy-life, it might well happen that nearly the whole substance of the brain is devoted to retention; in which case it would seem inevitable that its other functions must be left unperformed. Now, we positively know that this does not happen. If, then, nerve-cells are required for mental retention, and are not taken away for that purpose from existing groups of cells required for other purposes, they must be actually produced anew in some way, and the number of cells increased in proportion to the amount of retentiveness. For, by the very hypothesis, the cells devoted to mental "retention" must *remain* in the track in which they have been arranged; otherwise the physical substratum of memory would be broken up, recollection would have no road on which to travel, and memory would be *physically* impossible. In old times we were required to learn by heart large quantities of Greek and Latin poetry. In the school in which I was myself educated I was required, like others in my class, to learn, and did learn by heart, all Horace's *Odes*, four books of the *Æneid*, four books of the *Iliad*, besides many selections from Cicero's *Orations*, and a good deal else. In order to do this I had to repeat each line to myself over and over again, thus constructing new nerve-tracks, cell-junctions, etc. At the same time I went on eating and drinking, playing cricket or chess, talking, getting into mischief and the like; manifestly I had not detached, for the purpose of

retention, any of the *cells* required for these other purposes. *Out of what*, then, were the complicated nerve-tracks constructed by which I was enabled to learn by heart so much of Virgil and Homer, and keep a large part of it in memory to this very minute? If *new* cells were produced—as each of them must have *some* size and weight and chemical composition—the brain must have been enormously enlarged; and as the nerves of special sensation (as of the eye) are easily traced by the anatomist, I do not see why he should not discover the nerves devoted to Homer and Virgil. I cannot help regarding this whole theory of “the *mechanism* of retention” as pure hypothesis, and a very improbable hypothesis. Also, a perfectly gratuitous and unnecessary hypothesis; for *the very first act* of memory is as perfect as the last; and no nerve-track or system of cell-junctions can possibly have been provided for *that first act*.

Notwithstanding the length to which this note has already extended, it may be well to consider one more passage in Dr. Maudsley's book, which seems to me perhaps the most remarkable of all (pp. 318-319):

The individual brain is virtually the consolidated embodiment of a long series of memories; wherefore everybody, in the main lines of his thoughts, feelings and conduct, really recalls the experiences of his forefathers.

What a brain is “*virtually*,” I do not know; what it is *really*, nobody knows better than Dr. Maudsley. He has probably dissected hundreds of brains, both healthy and diseased; and it may be very safely affirmed—until he actually denies it—that, in no single dissection, has he ever come across a *memory*, much less a series of

memories, or a "consolidated embodiment of a long series" of them. I do not know what these last words mean. If they mean anything whatever—I really think they are absolute jargon, without either denotation or connotation—they seem to imply that memories can be solidified, like water into ice; and that when reduced to the physical condition of a solid they become organized, and form a body. This seems to me sheer nonsense. But to proceed :

Consciousness tells him, indeed, that he is a self-sufficing individual, with infinite potentialities of free-will; it tells him also that the sun goes round the earth.

Apart from the direct affirmations in this passage—"Consciousness tells him," etc.—there is the affirmation, in the form of a contemptuous *reductio ad absurdum*, that the deliverances of consciousness are not trustworthy, because one of them—viz.: "The sun goes round the earth"—has been undeniably demonstrated to be untrue. Now, all these assertions are not only false, but transparently and ludicrously false; and the whole passage is a crucial demonstration of the total incapacity of Dr. Maudsley—either from a natural want of aptitude that way, or from a narrowness of mind acquired by the exclusive or disproportionate study of physical science—to examine and discuss even the very simplest and most rudimentary questions in metaphysics or psychology. And be it remembered that these questions—What is consciousness? What does it affirm? Are its affirmations authoritative and undeniable?—*are* questions, *not* of physics, but of metaphysics, as to dealing with which, Dr. Maudsley's great knowledge and high authority *as a scientist* do not raise even the faintest presumption of competency.

They are, in truth, much further "out of his line" than practical shoemaking. Consciousness does, indeed, affirm that I am an individual; that is to say, that I am myself and not another; and I can know this *only* by consciousness. For if somebody else must *prove it to me*, he must still prove it to *me*; and before *he* can prove anything to *me*, he must know not only that *I am I*, but that *he is he*; which last truth can be given to him only by *his* consciousness; and so on *ad infinitum*. But neither consciousness, nor any other faculty, affirms that I am "a *self-sufficing* individual." Again, consciousness assured me that I got out of bed this morning of my own accord, without any external compulsion or even solicitation; in other words, that I had and exercised a power of self-determination or "free-will." But it told me nothing of the "potentialities" of free-will; that is to say, its power of doing this or that at any indefinite time, or in any conceivable circumstances. Much less did it affirm that these potentialities were "infinite." Again, the words *sun* and *earth* have a definite connotation determined by astronomers. The sun is not a blaze of light, nor the earth a flat surface like a huge plate, bounded by a circular horizon. Consciousness does not affirm even the existence of a "sun," or an "earth," nor that "the sun goes round the earth," nor that either of the two could by any possibility get "round" the other.

Is Dr. Maudsley simply "fooling" us?—having so mean an opinion of the intellectual abilities of Christians as to suppose that by telling us about witches, and ghost stories, and mad people who think themselves princes, and Mohammed's "epilepsy," he can eradicate out of our hearts and minds, to the last

smallest fibre, our religious feelings and beliefs? Does he scornfully deem it beneath him, in dealing with such abysmal fools, to keep up even an appearance of accuracy? Or does he *really not know* the meaning of the very word consciousness as it is employed in psychology, or even in the conversation of careful speakers? "Consciousness," says Sir W. Hamilton, "is the recognition of the mind or *ego* of its own acts or affections; and in this" (Mr. J. S. Mill says "he observes truly") "all philosophers are agreed." Again, he says: "*Consciousness* and *immediate knowledge* are terms universally convertible." Mr. J. S. Mill says: "Immediate knowledge, again, he [Sir W. Hamilton] treats as universally convertible with intuitive knowledge; and the terms are really convertible." On this whole subject Chapters VIII. and IX. of J. S. Mill's *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* are perfect models both of exposition and of philosophical criticism; whether we accept all Mr. Mill's conclusions or not. To pass from Dr. Maudsley to Mr. Mill is like passing out of a dense London fog to the perfectly transparent clearness of a bright, frosty morning. Sir W. Hamilton, indeed, believes that we know by consciousness not only our sensations, but the external object to which we refer them; for instance, not only the sensation of dazzling light, but the brilliant object—so far as being a *brilliant* object—which (we believe) causes those sensations. This may be, and is, doubted or denied. But to know by consciousness the existence, at the moment of consciousness, of a brilliant object, is altogether different from knowing by consciousness that it "moves round the earth," or even that it moves at all. I have no space for a detailed

analysis of the mental process by which we arrive at the belief, true or false, that the sun goes round the earth. But even to believe that the sun we see in the west in the evening is *the same sun* which we saw in the morning, involves not only at least two distinct states of *consciousness*, but many acts of *memory*, together with those quite innumerable processes by which we, so to speak, *localize* the sun at any given time, so as to be able to distinguish *east* from *west*, and also the space intervening between them. If this be merely *consciousness*, there is no knowledge which we obtain in any other way, and logical inferences are superfluous and impossible.

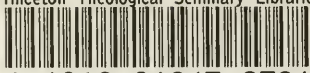
Dr. Maudsley's further affirmation that *consciousness* asserts what is not true, may be disposed of in the words of Mr. J. S. Mill (*Examination*, etc., Chapter IX., at the beginning, pp. 159-160, Holt's American Edition): "According to all philosophers, the evidence of *consciousness*, if only we can obtain it pure, is conclusive. This is an obvious, but by no means an identical, proposition. If *consciousness* be defined as intuitive knowledge, it is indeed an identical proposition to say that if we intuitively know anything, we do know it and are sure of it. But the meaning lies in the implied assertion that we do know some things immediately or intuitively. That we must do so is evident, if we know anything; for what we know mediately depends for its evidence on our previous knowledge of something else; unless, therefore, we know something immediately, we could not know anything mediately, and consequently could not know anything at all. . . . The verdict, then, of *consciousness*, or, in other words, our immediate and intuitive

conviction, is admitted, on all hands, to be a decision without appeal."

The whole question of *free-will*, for instance, is at bottom a question of *what consciousness affirms* in the matter; the clear evidence of consciousness, when obtained, being admitted, on both sides, to be entirely conclusive.



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